SPIRITISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

FLOURNOY

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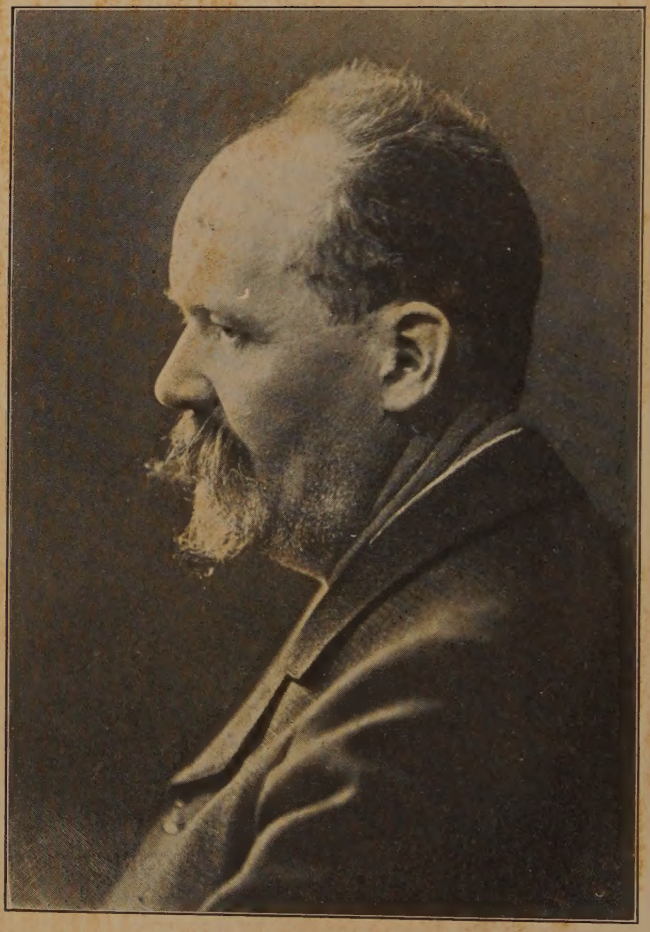

THEODORE FLOURNOY

SPIRITISM
AND
PSYCHOLOGY

BY
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TRANSLATED, ABRIDGED, AND
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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AUTHOR OF
"THE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM"
"THE COMING SCIENCE" ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE

ONE or two words may not be out of place as to my reasons for writing a book of this character. I believe that scientific investigators—physicians, physiologists, psychologists—have made a great mistake in neglecting for so long the so-called supernormal or metapsychical phenomena, under the pretext that there is nothing to be found but illusion or charlatanism, and have left its study exclusively to spiritists, theosophists, mystics, and occultists of all kinds. Fortunately, to-day it is almost like forcing open a door which is already open to insist upon the necessity of seriously occupying one's self with this subject, since the official savants themselves have ended by perceiving that there is here a realm worthy of serious investigation, whence issues unexpected light as to the nature of the constitution of our being and the play of our faculties. It will be a great day when the subliminal psychology of Myers and his followers and the abnormal psychology of Freud and his school succeed in meeting, and will supplement and complete each other. That will be a great forward step in science and in the understanding of our nature.

Spiritism, as I understand it, is a complete error. The facts which I have been enabled to study at first hand have left me with the impression that, despite certain superficial appearances which the man in the street accepts as conclusive, these phenomena are not spiritistic in reality, and one would be greatly deceived if he accepted them at their face value.

The greater part of these phenomena are, without exception, easily explained by mental processes inherent in mediums themselves and their associates. The state of passivity, the abdication of the normal personality, the relaxation of voluntary control over the muscular movements, and the ideas—this whole psycho-physiological attitude, where the subject is in the state of expectancy of communicating with the deceased—strongly predisposes him to mental dissociation and a sort of infantile regression, a relapse into an inferior phase of psychic evolution, where his imagination naturally begins to imitate the discarnate, utilizing the resources of the subconscious, the emotional complexes, latent memories, instinctive tendencies ordinarily suppressed, etc., for the various rôles it plays. This is what we might call the psychological theory of mediumship, as opposed to the diabolic theory held by Catholic theologians and the spiritistic theory of the intervention of the dead.

As for the supernormal incidents which are so often intermixed with mediumistic phenomena, and which spiritists interpret as implying the intervention of extra-terrestrial intelligences, to the extent that they

are truly supernormal and do not simply denote simple errors of observation, etc.—they denote, in truth, a veritable realm of forces and of laws still mysterious, but a realm in which (to my mind) the presence of the spirits of the dead has not as yet been adequately proved. Certainly it would be rash, *a priori*, to exclude the possibility, but, as there are a number of cases where supernormal phenomena (telepathy, telekinesis, etc.) occur, and in which they are obviously not connected with the spirits of the departed, but rather with spontaneous and remarkable powers in the living, it is logical to suppose—provisionally, at least, and until proof to the contrary be adduced—that it is the same in other, still more obscure, phenomena. This is notably the case in the so-called "physical phenomena" of mediumship—telekinesis, materialization, etc. I hold, with the Italian observers and others, that the phenomena observed in Eusapia Palladino's presence are genuine; and I do not think that the recent "exposures" of this medium in America have in the least settled the question. But, however that may be, I have discovered many signs which show that even these phenomena do not indicate the presence of any intelligences from "the other side"; for, in analyzing the mentality of these materializations I have discovered them to be only creations of the medium—elaborations of her subconscious imagination.

Let me insist here that we must not confound *spiritism*, which is a pretended scientific explanation

of certain *facts* by the intervention of spirits of the dead, with *spiritualism*, which is a religio-philosophical belief, opposed to materialism and based on the principle of value and the reality of individual consciousness, and which I conceive to be a necessary postulate for a wholesome conception of the moral life. Spiritism and spiritualism reveal, also, essentially different psychological characteristics. One may be a spiritist without being a spiritualist, and *vice versa*. So far as I myself am concerned I am a convinced spiritualist, but the spiritistic hypothesis inspires me with an instinctive distrust which could only be overcome by unescapable proofs.

Finally, I wish to say that had I not hesitated in associating names which have my entire respect and admiration with a work so unworthy of them, I should have dedicated this volume to the memory of

MARC THURY	WILLIAM JAMES
(1822–1905)	(1842–1910)
Professor at the University of Geneva	Professor at Harvard University

—who, of all the pioneers of psychical science, remain, in my eyes, the exponents, *par excellence*, of an open-minded philosophy, allied with the most rigorous scientific method.

TH. FLOURNOY.

Florissant, near Geneva.
Oct., 1910.

SPIRITISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

SPIRITISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

BY HEREWARD CARRINGTON

IT is only about once in a decade that a really *good* book upon psychical research appears — a book, *i.e.*, which we feel has definitely and permanently advanced our understanding of these obscure phenomena, and has helped us to interpret them in the light of the latest scientific investigations. Most books which are published upon this subject are merely a conglomerate of existing knowledge, composed largely of quotations from sources or from books by writers who knew little more of the subjects discussed than did the author himself. In such books there is displayed no originality, no daring speculations, no profundity of thought, no new facts—nothing but what had long been known to all intelligent students of these phenomena. It is different in the case before us. In this volume (which I personally consider throws more light on these phenomena than any other single volume so far published, with one

or two exceptions) these perplexing manifestations are treated in a manner at once daring and original, and with an impartiality rarely met with in high scientific circles. Professor Flournoy is well known the world over as a penetrating psychologist, and as the author of a remarkable book—*From India to the Planet Mars*—which has been more frequently quoted, perhaps, than any other work dealing with these questions, with the single exception of Myers's *Human Personality*. It was everywhere extolled as a masterpiece of impartiality and of keen psychological analysis; and these characteristics have extended to and are evident throughout the present volume. It is a pleasure to read a book so unique as this; and I wish to thank Professor Flournoy in this place for his prompt permission for me to translate this work into the English language, and for his according me the privilege of writing this Introduction, as well as the right to insert in the volume such foot-notes as I deemed desirable.

In the original this work is more than three times the length of the present volume, and the task of abridgment has been considerable. I believe, however, that almost the whole of the author's argument has been preserved *in statu quo*, and that his analysis has not materially suffered as the result of this condensation. A large proportion of the original volume was composed of cases collected by Professor Flournoy as the result of a "Questionnaire on Mediumship" sent out by him. These cases it has been found im-

possible to insert, but it is believed that not much of interest has been lost by this omission, since many of the cases present no good evidence for the supernormal, while practically all of them are but "types" which may be found in abundance in the S. P. R. *Proceedings* and elsewhere. I feel, therefore, that, although the book has doubtless lost by this omission, it has also gained by its present compactness and readable length.

The standpoint assumed by the author of this volume is sufficiently explained by him in his Preface and in the text itself, and will be apparent to all readers. It is that spiritism (the belief in communication with spirits of the dead) is "a fallacy," yet at the same time he acknowledges the existence of telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, materialization, and other supernormal phenomena which are not, as yet, recognized by official science; and (so far as I know) this book is the first to appear in English from the pen of a man holding an official position in a university which publicly and courageously champions the reality of such facts. Indeed, it is most curious to see the apparent certainty, the matter-of-course air, with which telepathy and kindred phenomena are discussed in this volume, being accepted by the majority of the European savants as now established beyond doubt, and used by them as explanations for still more obscure facts. How contrary to this attitude is the official dogmatism of the English and American scientists (the majority of

them) who will not admit the reality of the facts for an instant, and keep contending and pretending that telepathy has not yet been "scientifically established," etc., as if the mere negation could crush it out of existence! They cannot see that such a book as this, by its single openness of mind and frank discussion and analysis of the facts, is a thousandfold more destructive to the claims of spiritism than all the haughty negation of our official scientists. And, by adopting the policy they do, they also ruin all their chances for influencing the public in a rational manner—as it should be influenced. For, if telepathy, telekinesis, etc., were disproved, and shown not to exist, there would then be no possible escape from spiritism as an explanation of certain puzzling facts which are now explained by means of these processes without resorting to influences and intelligences from another world to accomplish the results we see. For, once the supernormal is admitted at all (as every one admits who has impartially and carefully studied the evidence), its facts must be explained *somehow*, if we are to offer any explanation at all; and the easiest explanation, certainly, is that offered in this volume—*viz.*, a combination of certain supernormal powers and faculties,[1] latent and forgotten memories, and the play

[1] I feel that I must apologize for the appearance of this word "faculty" in a scientific work, but it has been largely unavoidable, partly because of the fact that Professor Flournoy uses it so frequently in French (*faculté*) and partly because Mr. Myers employed the term so often in his *Human Personality*. I realize, however, its undesirability and its obsolete character.

of the subliminal imagination. There can be no doubt that this combination offers a formidable obstacle to spiritism; and I believe that the present book will do more than any previously published to discourage spiritistic practices and doctrines. This may be beneficial; it may be harmful. Spiritism may ultimately prove to be true (as Professor Flournoy himself says in several passages of his book), but that does not prevent us from accepting it only after every other theory has been shown to be insufficient; only after every normal explanation has been applied to the facts, and shown to be inadequate. It is this attitude of caution—of balanced and suspended judgment—which is most desirable in psychic investigation; it is this attitude which Professor Flournoy maintains throughout his book; it was this attitude which Professor James maintained, after more than thirty years' investigation; and (if I may be permitted to say so) that is my own attitude after nearly thirteen years' investigation of these phenomena. Every one who investigates fairly and impartially comes to the conclusion, sooner or later, that there is a realm of forces and causes as yet unknown; that psychic phenomena exist; that they are facts to be reckoned with by our human nature and by our science—if we wish to remain open to conviction at all. But as to the nature of these phenomena—how they are produced; who instigates them; whether the mentality we at times come in touch with in our psychical investigations be that of the medium him-

self, or whether it be the discarnate it claims to be, or whether it be a masquerading and lying spirit, or whether it be some chipped-off fragment of the cosmic mind wandering about, as it were, at "loose ends," or whether it be a "galvanized shell," animated by some other intelligence, or whether it be a "thought-form," created by the subliminal of the medium, or a teleplastic phantom, or whatever it may be—*that* is the question which remains as yet unsolved, and is the great problem of all problems which confronts us in psychic investigation to-day. *Quot homines; tot sententiæ*—let every man select the theory which appeals to him the most forcibly. But remember that the *facts* are equally existent, on any theory, and cannot be altered or disposed of by a wave of the hand, as if they were non-existent.

Professor Flournoy evidently finds great difficulty in accepting the doctrine of spiritism, and for several reasons. In the first place, he contends that it has not as yet been adequately proved; that most of its phenomena can be explained by latent subconscious incubation, cryptomnesia, and the added supernormal powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, etc. Certainly his analysis of many of the cases seems to bear this out in a very striking manner. This is, perhaps, the most valuable portion of the book, and the one which will be most acceptable to the average scientific man. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that there are many facts which remain unexplained. Premonitions and independent clairvoyance are hardly

touched upon by the author, while many of the phenomena witnessed in the case of Mrs. Piper certainly cannot be explained by the hypotheses advocated unless these be so stretched and extended as to make them (as Professor Flournoy himself admits) as remarkable and inconceivable as spiritism itself. Certainly a fact cannot be explained by any process of "latent incubation" in the medium when it can be shown that it was never known to her; nor can telepathy be invariably used as an explanation, for many of the facts were unknown to the sitter himself, and were only ascertained after constant inquiry and much letter-writing on his part. And, if we stretch telepathy to embrace and include all human living consciousness, we have here a theory which is as staggering as it is unconvincing, and one which, in spite of its hypothetical powers, fails to explain many of the facts, all of which are perfectly intelligible and natural on the spiritistic theory. I do not press this argument because I am anxious to defend the doctrine of spiritism, for I am not. I, myself, am completely "on the fence" with regard to it; but I cannot but point out the defects of the opposing theories, and feel that had Professor Flournoy had an opportunity to study at length and at first hand the trance phenomena of Mrs. Piper, he would somewhat change his attitude regarding this remarkable medium and be far less confident than he is now that her phenomena are due to other causes and bear other interpretations.

Professor Flournoy is also opposed to spiritism on

account of its harmful effects—moral, mental, and physical; and in this he is, I believe, quite right. When I wrote my book, *The Coming Science*, some years ago, I contended (pp. 59–78) that there was really no good, first-hand evidence that spiritistic practices induced abnormal and morbid states and conditions to the extent usually supposed. Further experience has caused me to change that opinion. I now believe that the danger of spiritistic practices is very great; and I think that this aspect of the problem is one which should be more widely discussed, and more attention should be given to it, by members of the Society for Psychical Research. In the chapter "Spiritism and Spiritualism" this question receives brief but trenchant analysis; and the recent writings of Viollet,[1] Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert,[2] and others should be more widely known than they are. But it is probable that all these books would not have influenced me had I not seen several examples of such detrimental influence myself—cases of delusion, insanity, and all the horrors of obsession. Those who deny the reality of these facts, those who treat the whole problem as a "joke," regard the planchette as a toy, and deny the reality of powers and influences which work unseen, should observe the effects of some of these spiritistic manifestations. They would no longer, I imagine, scoff at this investigation and be

[1] *Spiritism and Insanity*, London, 1910.

[2] *The Dangers of Spiritualism; Modern Spiritism; The Supreme Problem*, etc.

tempted to call all mediums simple frauds, but would be inclined to admit that there is a true "terror of the dark," and that there are "principalities and powers" with which we, in our ignorance, toy, without knowing or realizing the frightful consequences which may result from this tampering with the unseen world.[1]

And all this holds true—all is no less real—whether we regard this "other world"—this beyond—as a real spiritual universe, composed of good and evil influences, or whether we regard it simply as the result of the dissociation of the human mind, as an unhinging of the door of reason, letting in the delusory, dream-like flights of the subconscious. True it is that abnormal psychology has made great headway in explaining these phenomena, and in treating them upon rational lines when once they have been discovered. The work of Dr. Morton Prince, in particular, must be

[1] While these dangers of spiritism are admitted, and the practice of dabbling in the subject by the public cannot be too strongly deprecated, this is, to my mind, only another argument in favor of the necessity of having regular, well-trained investigators to handle such cases when they come to light. A few men of well-balanced minds should be created lifelong investigators in this field—which has now become a specialty, just as any other —and they should be looked upon as recognized authorities, and their work accepted upon these problems just as the work of a physicist is accepted on a problem in physics. When will the public learn wisdom in this respect, and find out that every Tom, Dick, and Harry (who has read a few books or attended a few séances—and without any scientific equipment) is not entitled to a serious hearing upon this question any more than upon any other question in which special knowledge and training are required?

regarded as little short of epoch-making;[1] his theory of "complex formation," analysis and synthesis of subconscious states, etc., is of great value, and calls for our sincere appreciation. At the same time, every student of psychic phenomena knows well enough that these explanations do not apply to many manifestations which have been recorded in the past, and are still being recorded to-day. In addition to the work now being done by the abnormal psychologists there is another field which requires exploration also - -the *supernormal*—and those who deny its existence simply show that they have not investigated long enough or carefully enough to discover it. I worked ten years in this field before I found my first genuine medium, presenting what I believed to be supernormal phenomena; but at length I discovered one, and to-day I do not think, I *know*, that telekinesis, clairvoyance, etc., are facts. No amount of argument would influence me in the slightest, since I feel that I have simply seen more than those who have never witnessed such facts. Psychical research is, therefore, in my eyes, a legitimate *science*, and will one day be recognized as such by our universities.

Yet, if these phenomena are facts, what a stupendous field is opened up before us! What a complex study; how unending, how real, how fascinating! If

[1] See, in particular, his *Dissociation of a Personality;* the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, passim*—the results of much of which have been popularly summarized by Coriat: *Abnormal Psychology.*

these facts be true, what tremendous scientific importance they have! How they must extend our knowledge of human life and its phenomena! What scientific theories must be evolved in the future to cover these facts! Yet I believe that the extension will not be so great as one commonly imagines; and, in any case, theory must always follow upon facts. It must be made to conform to and include them, and if one theory does not do so it must be discarded and another substituted which will. That is why many of us have urged discarding theories until the facts be adequately established. These once proved, theory can be adjusted to conform to them later. Let us have the *facts*, then, regardless of their interpretations. Science, to be impartial, must stand by its facts, no matter whether they conform to its idea of what is "possible" or not.

And this brings me to an important point which I desire to emphasize. It is that although I disagree with Professor Flournoy in several of his views and his conclusions, I nevertheless should like to see this book widely circulated and read. Though I cannot agree with many of his conclusions, I yet believe that the *method* of the book is admirable, and will prove most helpful to all who read it. All possible aspects of a problem should be presented as forcibly as possible, and only those who do not honestly desire the truth would wish to suppress such discussion. This book will doubtless give umbrage to many spiritists; they will consider it an attack upon their creed and

their intelligence. I do not consider it as such; it merely emphasizes the high standards of evidence which must be maintained before spiritism stands proved, and points out how far short of this standard the majority of spiritists fall in accepting the phenomena they do as a proof of the spirit world. Let us have the truth at all costs—even if that truth be painful, and deprive us of a life beyond the grave, for which so many crave.

Yet while Professor Flournoy is so skeptical of spiritism—of the intervention in our world of spirits from the beyond—he is, nevertheless, a doughty champion of "spiritualism"—the religio-philosophical doctrine opposed to materialism, which contends that a spiritual world exists, and that we live after the dissolution of the body and the apparent destruction of the human spirit at death. This is a curious paradox, to my mind, which is not altogether answered or elucidated in the final chapter, excellent as it is, on "Spiritism and Spiritualism." In spite of all the arguments advanced therein I cannot help but feel that, after all, these are but probabilities—"mere presumptions in favor of a future life"—without affording us any real *proof* of its existence.[1] And opposed to this ideal belief is the very palpable fact that life (so far as we know it in this universe) is invariably bound up with a material organism, and is

[1] Mr. Meader and I have insisted upon this aspect of the problem over and over again in our *Death: Its Causes and Phenomena*, pp. 256–296, 394, 395, 517, etc.

inseparable from it; and that when this organism perishes at death the mental life becomes extinct also, just as all other bodily functions become extinct. Here are the brutal facts, and it is useless to oppose to them any religious or moral considerations. The fact remains, and even a proof of William James's theory of the "transmissive function" of the brain[1] raises only a possibility, a *presumption*, without supplying us with any *proof*. Proof can come only in one way—by the establishment of *facts* which can be explained only by supposing that an intelligence is operative, distinct from that of the medium or any of the sitters present—an intelligence possessing memory and personal identity—*i.e.*, a spirit. If such a fact were ever established, then a spiritual world of some sort would be proved, and scientific and philosophical conceptions would have to be remodeled to conform to it. But in view of the strength of the materialistic position it is hopeless in these days to try to establish the reality of a spiritual world in any other manner.

Now, psychic phenomena would seem to give us just this proof, to establish this fact. Here we have direct proof, apparently, that a spiritual world exists; that life and thought can exist apart from body and organization; and if that were once admitted, there would no longer be any doubt that we survived the tomb, and entered a spiritual world, preserving at the same time our personality—our sentiments,

[1] *Human Immortality* (Ingersoll lecture).

memories, and aspirations. But if this be true, it seems to many of us that the fact can somehow be established, *must* be established, and consequently we regard this science as "the most important in the world to-day," as Mr. Gladstone said, "by far the most important."

But Professor Flournoy, who believes in the reality of a spiritual world, holds that spirit communications have not been established. This is the curious part of this theory, to my mind. If we *grant* the existence of a spiritual world, in which intelligent beings reside, then, it seems to me, these spiritual beings have over and over again proved their identity as fully as—far more fully, indeed, than—we prove our own identity to one another over the telephone. Here the slightest hint, the smallest scrap of information, will suffice to establish the identity of the speaker at the other end of the line. Compared with such scanty evidence of personal identity how much more fully have the "communicators" in the Piper case, *e.g.*, proved their existence to us! A thousand thousand times! And, as I see it, the only reason why we hesitate in the latter case and not in the former is because we have to prove, not only the *identity* of the speaker, but also his *reality;* not only that it is the voice of our friend which is talking, but that it is a human voice at all. This has been the classical argument against spiritism. It has been admitted over and over again that far better evidence of identity has been adduced through Mrs. Piper than by means of any ordinary

telephonic conversation, "but," it is said, "in the latter case we know that an intelligent operator is present; we do not have to prove *that*. But in the former case we have to prove the very *existence* of the intelligent operator; hence, the standard of evidence must be far higher." Admitted; for this very reason test after test has been devised—the "cross-correspondence" tests between mediums arranged, etc. It is the only logical reply to the position of skepticism. But inasmuch as Professor Flournoy *admits* the reality of the intelligent operator, he should require very little evidence to prove to him the personal identity of the speaker, certainly far less evidence than has been obtained in the past, and which he tries to dispose of so strenuously in Chapter V.

It is interesting to note that Professor Flournoy, in Chapter VII, defends with some warmth and at considerable length the noted medium, Eusapia Palladino, who has been the subject of such careful investigation by scientific men in Europe for more than twenty years. It is very evident to any one reading this chapter that "materialization" is now accepted by those men who have studied her case at length as having been thoroughly established; and it is spoken of by them in the same matter-of-course fashion as telepathy, in dealing with the mental problems. The psycho-dynamic theory, worked out so skilfully by Professor Morselli, is considered by the majority of European savants as being the one most

acceptable, and, the facts once established, is certainly the only theory which adequately covers and explains them short of spiritism. But the fact remains that, no matter what theory be adopted, the reality of the facts is no longer questioned by them; they are established beyond doubt.

It would be out of place for me to discuss at any length the case of this medium, whom I brought to America in 1909 for study, and who failed more or less completely to convince the American savants that she possessed supernormal powers. Both Eusapia and myself were the subjects of so much misrepresentation, and my own reputation suffered so severely in consequence of my bringing her here, that it would be useless to attempt any extended defense in this place. I need only say that so far from having been completely "exposed" in this country—as the public imagines—she presented a large number of striking phenomena which have never been explained, and that only a certain number of her classical and customary tricks were detected, which every investigator of this medium's phenomena had known to exist and had warned other investigators against for the past twenty years. No *new* form of trickery was discovered; only the old and well-known methods of trickery which we, in common with all her investigators, knew all about, and of which I warned the sitters in a "Circular Letter," sent to them before Eusapia landed in this country, describing exactly her methods of trickery, and how to guard against them.

Yet, in spite of this, when trickery was detected, all was disregarded, and the report spread broadcast that all her manifestations were the result of trickery. It would be difficult to imagine a more inconclusive and superficial examination than this in the whole history of spiritism.

Any one reading Professor Flournoy's book will see at a glance that this so-called American "exposure" has not in the least influenced the European investigators, who continue to regard her phenomena as supernormal and remarkable. To them the investigation in this country betrayed the work of the novice who disliked his work and desired to be "through" with it as quickly as possible rather than that of the patient investigator who works for months and years[1] before publishing his report. As I have said elsewhere, in criticizing this investigation:

"Such an investigation, such a method, might, perhaps, have been justified were it not for the fact that Eusapia Palladino came to this country with twenty years of scientific investigation behind her. If she had been an entirely *new* medium, about whom nothing was known, then such a method would have been far more justifiable. But inasmuch as this was

[1] The Psychological Institute, of Paris, worked with Eusapia Palladino for *four years* before publishing its report upon her case — so well analyzed by Professor Flournoy — in which it declares a number of her phenomena undeniably genuine. In America the investigators obtained *two or three sittings* (in some cases only one), and pronounced the whole case fraudulent on the strength of *this* examination!

not the case, seeing that many men of scientific repute in Europe—who have studied her case carefully for years—had publicly stated their belief in her powers, seeing that they had done so in spite of her trickery, which was known to them also, and against which they warned all investigators, does it not appear irrational and superficial to pronounce the case fraudulent from start to finish on so brief an examination? Is the presumption not, rather, that the American investigators have been too hasty in their conclusions; that they did not investigate the case patiently and scientifically—as did their European confrères — before passing final judgment upon so important a matter?"

I believe that future investigations will confirm this view of the case, if not with Eusapia (who seems to have lost her powers very largely), at least with other mediums, such as that of Mlle. Tomczyk, discovered by Doctor Ochorowicz. Such cases as this—and the very striking personal experiments described in this volume by Professor Flournoy (in which a number of private persons moved objects without contact, after practice)—will serve to throw a backward light upon all these historical cases, and particularly that of Eusapia, and will serve to indicate that such powers as those possessed by her are genuine and remarkable, and, when this has been accomplished (as I feel confident will be the case very shortly), then the American investigators will feel with a sudden shock of remorse that they let slip through their

fingers one of the most remarkable and phenomenal cases of the present century, and will upbraid themselves for having allowed this extraordinary woman to leave American shores without adequate scientific investigation—without even attempting to study her in a laboratory, as she has been studied for years in Europe. If this does not bring home to them the keenest remorse and chagrin I can only say that it should, and I have nothing further to add!

In conclusion I wish to say that I owe the greatest debt of gratitude—which I herewith tender—to my wife, Helen Wildman Carrington, who has helped me throughout in the task of translation and abridgment, and without whose valued assistance I should have been virtually unable to accomplish the task within the limited time at my disposal. To her equally belongs the credit for this translation, which, imperfect as it may be, nevertheless involved an immense labor.

I

THE STUDY OF THE SUPERNORMAL

1. THE ATTITUDE DOGMATIC AND THE ATTITUDE CRITICAL

SPIRITISTS often reproach official science for its contempt of their phenomena and its obstinacy in refusing to investigate them. It is true that a great number of official savants—perhaps the majority—do not conceal their aversion to all that relates to occultism, and that, in certain countries, there reigns in the university spheres an atmosphere absolutely hostile to these researches. The majority of psychologists will not touch upon the subject in their courses in the universities, or do so in an ironical and disparaging manner. For me, whom chance and circumstances have made a "professor"—in spite of a temperament desperately unofficial—I have not scrupled for twelve years to extend my lectures to cover telepathy and mediumship, and deal very seriously with the cases of Mrs. Piper and Eusapia Palladino, without, I believe, in any way swerving from truly scientific principles in doing so. But I recognize that in not rejecting, *a priori*, the possi-

bility of these phenomena and in deeming them worthy of study I find myself in disagreement with many of my colleagues in psychology. Impartiality decides me to give here a few quotations from their works, which it would be easy to multiply; two or three will, however, suffice.

"The great Helmholtz," relates Professor Barrett,[1] "said to me once that neither the evidence of all the members of the Royal Society nor the evidence of his own senses would ever make him believe in thought-transference, since thought-transference was impossible."

"An illustrious biologist," reports Professor James,[2] "told me one day that even if telepathy were proved to be true the savants ought to band together to suppress and conceal it, because such facts would upset the uniformity of nature, and all sorts of other things, without which the scientists cannot carry on their pursuits."

One of the highest authorities of physiological psychology, and the founder, even, of the first laboratory of psychology (Leipzig, 1879), Professor Wundt, who was present many years ago at the séances of Slade, expressed himself in a manner more explicit still, saying that "no man of science, truly independent and without *parti pris*, could be interested in occult phenomena."

And more lately Professor Münsterberg wrote:

[1] *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought*, London, 1908, p. 17.

[2] *The Will to Believe*, p. 10.

". . . As to spirit communications, *there are none, and there never will be any.*"

The reasons for such an attitude are many. Some are disdainful—for example, when we reproach the phenomena for occurring only in the presence of hysterical and common people. Some are terrifying—when we declare that if they were real, this would upset the immutable laws of the universe, and be the "death of all science and of all true idealism." Anything but that! Some are profound and subtle, like the demonstrations, *a priori*, of the impossibility of these facts, by the aid of arguments drawn from philosophy, the theory of knowledge, etc. But all these objections, whatever may be their value, *per se*,[1] seem to me to have a common trait, which is their awkward instability. They naturally convince those who are already convinced, but for the others they have just the contrary effect, suggesting to them the idea that if occult phenomena are so badly observed and condemned so harshly by established science the suspicion is aroused that there may be in them a grain of truth, and that it will be a troublesome day when this truth is demonstrated for science.

[1] This value is reduced to almost nothing when one examines these objections closely, and we remain astonished that serious men should have recourse to arguments of such a logical inanity. But it is explained when we remember the psychological motives which underlie them. These motives rely upon two very powerful tendencies of our nature: First, the intellectual need of the absolute, the definite, the immutable; the aversion of our understanding for all that appears strange for us. Second, the instinct of self-preservation—individual or social. . . .

It is certain that the authoritative dogmatism of so many of the great savants is accepted no more by our irreverent generation than by any other—by the calm and serious student no more than by the credulous spiritists or by the narrower occultists and mystics. As to these two extreme classes, the impartial spectator distrusts both, seeing under their arguments the same unconfessed but impassioned element—terrible fear on the one hand and intense desire on the other—of seeing certain facts force an entrance into science in order to be, henceforth, strengthened by its protection. *Fanaticism* and *intolerance* are such human snares that even superior minds often have much trouble in fighting against them; but when we find it in individuals of the highest scientific culture, far from adding to their *prestige*, it seems to be particularly unpleasant in them, and illustrates a hidden streak of ridiculous smallness and pettiness. This is why, instead of thundering against "superstition"—which frightens no one, and only adds to the attraction of "forbidden fruit"—it is my opinion that the official savants would be wiser, so far as they themselves are concerned, and more useful to humanity if they associated themselves with the contemporary psychical research movement, occupying themselves chiefly with maintaining its high standards of experimental method without being in any way uneasy as to the results or its ultimate verdict.

Let us take things at the worst, and suppose that (by reason of still more extraordinary cases, and

especially better controlled cases than those we have seen up to the present) the intervention of the discarnate in our ordinary life be established. Does any one really believe that our established science would thereby be overthrown, and that it would not have sufficient suppleness to fall on its feet? Assuredly not! As one acute critic has said: "If it should some day be established that the intervention of spirits in our world were proved true, science would be the first to propagate and advance this truth, and would employ all her zeal in spreading this knowledge. The revolution which would result from it in our actual scientific conceptions would be far less than one believes—far less than that which was produced in bygone years by the views of Copernicus or Darwin, by their theories as to the nature of the universe. Our natural sciences can be adapted to everything, and they will digest, without difficulty, even the spirits of the spiritists on the day in which we are forced to admit them."

To all this may be raised the objection that the principle of the conservation of energy does not allow us to postulate any external powers or influences affecting the workings of our closed system of the material universe, and the principle of parallelism or psycho-physical correlation, which does not admit of psychic life without a physical substratum or an organic correlative. Hence no spirits without bodies! But this objection is not without its reply. In the first place, we are mistaken as to the value of our

great scientific axioms, intangible dogmas, which we have formulated to cover certain facts by pure logical necessity. In the second place, there is hardly any evidence, so far, that we shall ever have to transcend the law of conservation in order to explain all these facts, for, even if all the fantastic recitals of which spiritistic literature is full were true, there would be enough reserve of energy in the bosom of cosmic matter, as the physicists themselves have shown us, to furnish enough for all imaginable spiritual entities or organisms, ordinarily invisible—*perisprit*, or astral bodies, etc.—which would permit them to enter into communication with us without offending any of the principles of conservation or of parallelism. We must not forget that spiritism is, in a sense, in the same relation to materialism as imponderable matter is to ponderable which falls under our sense observations. It will thus be seen that spiritism is really materialism, though its adherents give it quite another interpretation. Consequently, I do not see what is to hinder it from agreeing with all our fundamental conceptions of this universe; or, if you prefer it, what hinders them from being sufficiently enlarged, without changing their nature, to embrace all the spiritistic phenomena which we could wish on the day on which they are proved to be real.

This is why I am astonished at the position taken by certain psychical researchers who admit the reality of supernormal facts, even materializations, yet indulge in a sort of censure of the interpretations

proposed, and absolutely exclude the spiritistic hypothesis as being absurd and inadmissible. I do not explain their *parti pris* otherwise than as a relic of dogmatism. If they are content to say that this hypothesis is, up to the present, inadequate, superfluous, or insufficient in the presence of certain proved facts, they would be within their rights as impartial researchers; but they appear to me to weaken their position when they overgeneralize beyond their experiences, and seem to wish to foresee the verdict of the future. It would be far wiser to leave to future investigations the care either of definitely disproving the spiritistic theory or of definitely confirming it. What sort of figure will these sworn enemies of spiritism cut if chance brings us to-morrow a new medium, producing phenomena of such a nature that we are forced to accept the spiritistic doctrine in place of the hidden and unknown powers of the medium? And, inasmuch as the case has not yet been by any means settled, why not show the spiritists the fairness —or the civility, even—of granting that their hypothesis is at least conceivable, without opposing to it the sentimental reasons which one may have against it (and no one more than myself) from various points of view—moral, religious, philosophical, social, etc.—since it contains nothing essentially anti-scientific or absurd? For myself, I see nothing at all to prevent our extending this tolerance far enough to accord to them the title which they claim—that it is a "working hypothesis," not, it is true, in the sense of a necessary

supposition, such as our concepts of atoms, ether, etc., but in the sense of possible suppositions, though not yet demonstrated, which it is as well not to lose sight of—side by side with fraud, hallucination, and psychological processes, in the study of those trance phenomena which the past few years have seen multiply in the pathway of science.

As a model of fairness of ideas in this realm I shall recall the example of Thury at the beginning of his metapsychic studies, about half a century ago. After the famous experiments of movements of tables without contact, Count Gasparin wrote a celebrated book in which he supported the reality of the facts and the necessity of studying them, but in which he repudiated spiritism as "absurd" and "contrary to moral truth," such as he understood it. He certainly had a right to his personal opinion on this point, but, in making it intervene in a scientific question he showed himself to be dogmatic. Thury, however, represented on this occasion the serene impartiality of a mind truly critical; he refused to subscribe to the attacks of Gasparin against the spiritistic theory, and considered it his duty as a savant to affirm, on the one hand, "that the known facts are not as yet sufficient for the demonstration of this theory," and, on the other hand, "that the absurdity of the belief in the intervention of spirits has not been scientifically demonstrated." He contended that by abstaining from recognizing this last point, and that by developing a non-spiritistic theory of the phenomena in ques-

tion, he might lead astray all the readers of his book —if there should happen to be some truth in spiritism after all. "It would be bad logic," he once said, in one of the pages which Gasparin wished him to modify, "to affirm that we could never discover other wills than those of animals or men just because we have seen nothing here resembling them, for facts of this kind may have been *observed*, but not as yet scientifically *demonstrated*. . . ." And he ended his brochure in this sentence, which has scarcely lost its meaning for us: "Whether they will or not, the savants must learn by means of their errors to suspend their judgment upon things which they have not sufficiently examined."[1]

If the critical attitude, such as I understand it and strive to practise (perhaps without success), implies the possible admission of all the facts, even the most absurd, it implies also an absolute submission to the rules and principles of experimental method. These rules and principles are, in general, admitted, and sometimes excellently formulated by the spiritists themselves when they discuss coldly the question of method; the unfortunate thing is that they forget them too easily in application. For to speak only of the principle of the economy of causes, which is capital when it concerns the interpretation of phenomena, apparently supernormal, I have found it recently stated in the clearest manner by M. Delanne (who is, it is true, one of the most scientific of the spiritists). He writes:

[1] Thury, *Les Tables Tournantes*, Geneva, 1855, p. 61.

"The scientific method says that we should not appeal to new factors when those that we know suffice for an explanation of the facts." Now there is no rule which is more frequently disregarded in séances and by spiritists themselves than this. It is a fact that the theory and the practice of the spiritists (and what appears to me the only legitimate scientific method) are often quite opposed to each other. I could not better express the thing than by reproducing the following lines (from my reply to "Autour," in which the spiritists of Geneva criticized my explanations in the case of Mlle. Smith and tried to substitute theirs):

"The method of reasoning adopted by the spiritists, startling as it is, might be summarized in two formulæ:

"1. Every time that a normal or a natural explanation of certain phenomena seems a little difficult, or as yet unknown, it must be admitted that this phenomenon is due to supernormal causes.

"2. There are no other supernormal causes than the intervention of spirits. Hence all supernormal phenomena, *i.e.*, those explained with difficulty, ought to be considered a proof of spiritism."

It may be that many of the spiritists, taken individually, would repulse these principles, or refuse to recognize them, under this brutal form, but what we claim is that they have tacitly inspired all the discussions of "Autour" bearing upon concrete facts, as every one can see by reading his work attentively.

On the other hand, the method of reasoning upon

the same facts adopted by the psychologists can be condensed into the two following principles:

1. We must not invoke a supernormal cause to explain a phenomenon until it has been thoroughly established that the phenomenon is not due to any normal cause.

2. The intervention of the discarnate is only one of the conceivable forms of the supernormal; there are many others equally possible (telepathy, clairvoyance, unknown forces within our own organism, cosmic memory, etc.), so that in each particular case a special examination is necessary to decide whether a fact, supposedly proved to be supernormal, tells in favor of spiritism or not.

"Between these two methods of reasoning it is not necessary to say which is the better from the scientific point of view."[1]

The spiritists will reply to me, perhaps, that in attributing all extraordinary phenomena to a single cause (spirits) their method is still more economical than mine, which postulates a crowd of supernormal causes. But this would be to forget the abyss which separates causes *whose reality is already established* from those which are purely problematical. And this shows exactly how much one can differ in the handling of principles upon which general opinion would seem to be necessarily unanimous.

Thus, if an uneducated person who had never committed verse to memory falls asleep and begins to

[1] Flournoy, *A propos d'un livre spirite*, etc., June, 1901.

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write superb poetry, the spiritist concludes immediately the presence of some superior mind—a poet or discarnate writer—who utilizes the medium as a sort of simple instrument. For myself, on the contrary, I conclude that this person possesses a talent as yet unsuspected, which, after a period of latent incubation, more or less lengthy, suddenly blossoms forth under favorable conditions. In the same way the physical phenomena seen at certain séances are attributed by the spiritists to inferior spirits, independent of the persons present, while I should consider it my duty first to attribute them to forces still unknown, but inherent in these persons themselves. For, rather than have recourse to the intervention of occult beings of whose nature we know nothing, it would always be more in conformity with the rules of science to admit that human beings have, in this life, forces and faculties which escape the observation of scientists, only being able to manifest under certain circumstances. In other words, if the facts force the naturalist to admit new forces and causes in the universe, he is not thereby forced to admit the presence of spirits or other beings unknown and intangible. To make this legitimate, since it is quite contrary to the principle of economy, it would be necessary to have special proofs, more convincing than those with which the spiritists are generally contented.

I may say, in conclusion, that a critical attitude is essential in problems such as this. What I reproach the spiritists for is not that they believe in the in-

tervention of spirits in their lives—perhaps in doing so they are nearer the ultimate truth than those who do not—but it is in imagining that their demonstrations are as yet scientifically established, when, as a matter of fact, they infringe, without modesty, the essential requirements of science. No one is obliged to play bridge or tennis, but if he does so he must observe the rules of the game. Science also is a game—perhaps the most difficult of all—but if one plays at it one must observe its laws, even if these latter are, in the last analysis, only conventions or prejudices destitute of absolute truth, and simply consecrated through usage by reason of their pragmatic utility.

2. AN INQUIRY INTO MEDIUMSHIP

Inasmuch as so little is known regarding mediumship—its laws and limitations—it occurred to me that some light might be thrown upon these problems by distributing a circular letter, or "Questionnaire," among a number of persons who possessed mediumistic power, or who had experienced remarkable psychic experiences. In this manner it might be possible to study their phenomena and themselves in a manner slightly more detailed than had been attempted in the past.

In order to accomplish this I prepared and widely distributed the following letter, to which I received a number of replies:

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *Do you possess mediumistic faculties?* Describe not only the ordinary nature of your mediumship, but its exceptional

forms, and all the impressions, subjective and objective, which you have had in this domain.

2. *At what date and under what circumstances did you discover your mediumship?* Was it manifested spontaneously before you even heard such facts spoken of? Was it assisted in its development by exterior circumstances, such as conversations or readings upon the subject, spiritistic séances, experiments with other mediums, magnetization, imposition of hands, trials, and voluntary practices, etc.?

3. *What modifications have your mediumistic powers undergone with time?* (Progress, changes of nature, weaknesses, momentary eclipses, etc.) To what causes or influences do you attribute these modifications?

4. *If you have not characteristic mediumship, have you ever had remarkable psychic phenomena*, such as prophetic dreams, presentiments, voices, apparitions, ecstasies, inspirations, second-sight, etc.?

5. *Have you had in your family any other persons* (parents, grandparents, uncles or aunts, brothers or sisters) *gifted with mediumistic powers*, or who have experienced remarkable psychic phenomena?

6. *Have you been present at séances or psychic experiments*, and what phenomena have you witnessed at them?

7. *What have you observed in yourself or in others relative to the influence exercised upon mediumship by various physical and mental conditions*, such as age, sex, temperament, state of health or sickness, profession, life, marriage, maternity, changes of social position, emotions, etc.?

8. *Inversely, what is the influence of mediumship upon the physical and mental health*, upon life, character, ideas, health? Have you remarked whether mediums are distinguished from other persons by certain special characteristics other than the fact of their mediumship?

9. *What is your opinion or personal impression upon mediumistic phenomena?* What, in your opinion, are their practical advantages, or the reverse? What do you think of spiritistic doctrines? Of what importance are they to your moral, religious, and mental life? What ought to be their rôle in education?

[As the result of this "Questionnaire" seventy-two documents were received by Professor Flournoy, arranged and studied by him. It is impossible to quote or even summarize these cases here, which should be read in the original in their extended form. The value of these cases varies much—some of them illustrating merely credulity, others, on the contrary, presenting strong evidence for the supernormal. Some of them include records of séances, such as those formerly given by Home, Williams, etc.; others narrate personal experiences of a striking nature, and, in several instances, the gradual development of automatic writing is most interestingly shown, with diagrams of the progress made each day in the writing. After enumerating these cases Professor Flournoy proceeds to devote a number of pages to their statistical and psychological study, the following extracts being the most important, it appears to me, of this portion of his volume:]

The seventy-two cases received by me comprise twenty-three men, aged from twenty-seven to seventy-one (average forty-nine and one-fifth years), and forty-nine women from fifteen to sixty-nine years (average forty-eight and one-fifth years). . . . In spite of the fact that my collection of cases seems to show that mediumship is more common in women than in men, it appears to me that really *good* mediums are just as rare in the one sex as in the other—Stainton Moses and Mrs. Piper, Home and Eusapia Palladino, etc. Let us now make a few general remarks upon

the psychological characteristics presented by these cases.

3. QUALITATIVE DIVERSITY OF MEDIUMISTIC PHÈNOMENA

If we had for mediums, as for plants, a natural classification already established, we should only have to classify our cases in various subdivisions; into classes, such as poorly developed mediumship, semi-developed cases, and finely developed mediums, etc. . . . Mediums, as such, are differentiated by their mediumistic powers, and as their mediumistic gifts are only tendencies made permanent—the habitual predisposition to present observable phenomena—it is upon the study of mediumistic phenomena that we must base definitely the classification of the mediums themselves. But these phenomena can be studied in themselves, detached from their living context and compared with one another without respect to the individuals through whom they occur. We are thus led to study (1) the qualitative classification of the phenomena, and (2) the clinical forms of mediumship. We must study both to arrive at a satisfactory determination of the natural types. Let us commence with the first of these. Considered in themselves, mediumistic phenomena present many aspects. I classify the principal types as follows:

1. *According to Supernormal Authenticity.* This would enable us to distinguish true from pseudo- and false mediums—according to whether the phenomena

have really their source (at least in part) in the beyond, or whether they proceed entirely from the subject himself—either consciously (by fraud) or subconsciously, in a trance state. . . .

2. *According to their Intellectual Content or their Signification.* The value of this varies enormously, but may be divided into two great classes, as follows:

(*a*) The non-significant phenomena: simple elementary ideas, noises, sudden lights, movements of the table, unintelligible scribbles of the pencil, movements of objects without contact, etc. It is not their content, but their production, which claims our attention in such cases, and confers upon them their value as psychic manifestations. . . . It is of interest to note that epileptic, hysterical, and other purely morbid phenomena have not once been mentioned in the cases sent to me, showing that such phenomena are now well enough recognized, even by the masses, to be left to the medical specialists, and are not regarded by them as supernormal phenomena, calling for special investigation.

(*b*) The significant phenomena—by reason of their content. These are the most numerous. . . . The essential feature is that the messages convey information to the medium and those present, of which the medium does not feel that he is the author.

These may be divided into five categories: prophetic, telepathic, clairvoyant, inspiratory, and "efficient" phenomena; *i.e.*, those in which the medium apparently breaks the ordinary laws of nature without

suffering in consequence, produces "apports," is cured or cures others, etc. Under this heading may also be classed the physical phenomena. In most mediums two or more of these are combined, though there is to be noticed a tendency among mediums to "specialize" in one particular direction.

3. *According to their Psychological Nature.* Under this heading are both sensory and motor automatisms. We do not find any cases of gustatory phenomena, but a few olfactory, and several interesting specimens of tactile impressions—thermic, kinesthetic, etc. . . . Motor automatisms are most frequently manifested in table-tippings, automatic writing, tendencies to speak or to act, etc. In most cases these are mixed to a very great extent. There are also emotional phenomena in which the subject feels sad, depressed, inclined to weep, etc., perhaps receiving at the same time by some form of hallucination the news of the death of a near friend or relative. . . . We might include under this heading cases of sympathy, in which the mediums seem to feel the state of mind or the past sufferings of some dead person, which constitute, often, the first step toward true mediumship—these and the feelings of "a presence," etc., form the transition stage to the next group. These comprise phenomena of "intuition"—automatisms of an uncertain psychological nature. The subject knows that he is to receive a certain letter, hear a certain piece of news, etc. Next we have phenomena of ideation—scientific inspirations, literary, poetical, etc. Finally, we have

the cases of so-called physical phenomena, which may be studied from a double point of view—that of purely objective facts, as phenomena, and as they appear and feel to the medium who produces them.

4. *According to the Condition of Personality in which they are Produced:* perfect wakefulness, sleep (dream), and all the intermediary states, normal or abnormal, distraction and reverie; hypnogogic and dream-like states, complete and semi-somnambulism, trance, secondary states, total automatism, etc.

5. *According to their Utility for the Subject.* These seem to be expressly destined to help and assist the medium, to counsel, warn, and direct him (teleological automatisms)—even to save life. Others, on the contrary, are as plainly hostile, and pursue him with insults, threats, and deceptions. The greater part, finally, wish him neither good nor evil.

6. *According to their Dependence upon the Will.* It goes without saying that mediumistic phenomena are always independent of it, are automatic, for if the subject produced them voluntarily, with full consciousness of being the author and initiator, he would attribute them to himself, like the rest of his acts in every-day life. Nevertheless, the mental attitude seems to have an appreciable effect upon these phenomena—concentration, the passive attitude, etc., or even prayer.

4. CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDIUMSHIP

I do not wish to insinuate by this term "clinical" that mediumship is necessarily a *disease*, for few

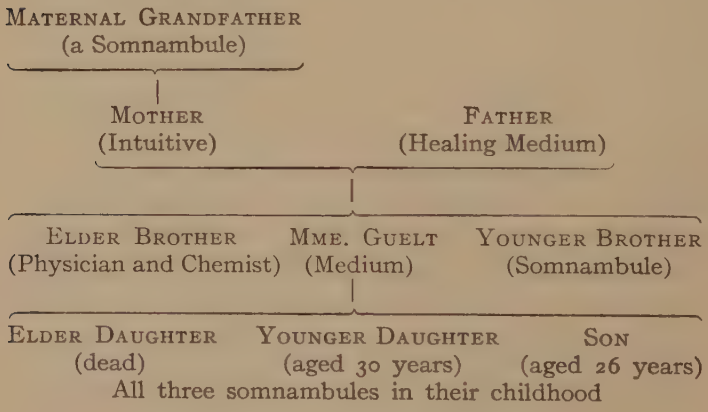
mortals, on the whole, have enjoyed better health and attained a greater age than certain illustrious mediums—*e.g.*, Swedenborg. I use the term, in default of a better, in its scientific sense, where "clinical observation" comprehends the complete study of the manner in which a disease begins, is evolved, and terminates in a particular case; in the same way that medicine does not limit itself to note isolated symptoms, but forces itself to follow morbid processes in their progress, and even prolongs its researches beyond its apparent boundaries, going back to its antecedents and the hereditary traits of the disease; on the other hand, following it, if possible, into its future ramifications and consequences. In order to understand mediumship, therefore, we should not study detached phenomena, but see it unroll itself in all its continuity in the individuals who possess it. Let us consider a few points which have been brought to light as the result of my inquiry.

Heredity.—The most striking case of this character which I have encountered is that of Mme. Guelt, in which parapsychic [1] gifts and tendencies were manifested in four generations of her family.

Her maternal grandfather, who lived in a little vil-

[1] Professor Flournoy prefers the term "parapsychic" to "metapsychic," proposed by Richet; or simply "psychic"—the term usually used in Anglo-Saxon countries. The word was proposed nearly twenty years ago by Boirac. It would be well, Professor Flournoy thinks, to limit Richet's term, "metapsychic," to those phenomena which have been definitely proved supernormal in character.—TR.

lage in the canton of Vaud, had attacks of somnambulism. For example, he had the care of the keys of the church steeple (because he lived very near the church), and one night, in his sleep, rang the bells, which awoke the whole village without waking himself. After this the keys of the steeple were taken away from him. Her mother was very intuitive and sensitive. Her father had the power of curing people. The people came to consult him for fractures, for sprains, shocks, etc.; he remained for one moment immovable in prayer, then made passes over the sick person. Mme. Guelt herself has been reproached for not having developed this gift of cure. Her



elder brother, who was devoted to science, does not appear to have presented any phenomena of this kind, but her younger brother was a somnambulist. He used to clothe himself in his military uniform at night

or work in the fields without knowing it. Finally, her three children have been somnambules. Her youngest daughter, who died at the age of fourteen, arose and put on her clothes one night in her sleep, which terrified her parents; they consulted the famous magnetizer La Fontaine, who lived in the same house, and he advised them never to wake their child abruptly during her attacks of somnambulism. Her other daughter, at the age of fifteen, clothed herself and walked out upon the stairs, saying she was "going to school." Her son, also, having gone to bed, sometimes went to the shop, still fast asleep. (These two last children, to-day very healthy, do not interest themselves in spiritism. Her husband, M. Guelt, has experienced no phenomena of this nature.)

There is no doubt that the predisposition toward psychic phenomena is in the highest degree hereditary. But when one remembers how difficult it is to trace hereditary characteristics in any case it may well be understood how difficult it is in such a case as this [1] for the transmission of a thing so nebulous, elastic, and protoform as mediumship.

The Appearance of Mediumship.—Some people have experienced spontaneous phenomena since childhood.

[1] For a discussion of this question of psychical heredity see the following references, among others:

Journal, S. P. R., Vol. I, p. 351; III, 355, 356, 358; IV, 229, 230, 276, 292; V, 10; VII, 4; VIII, 264; IX, 122, 266, 267. *Proceedings*, IV, 162, 165; V, 309; VI, 242; VII, 103, 104, 106, 343; VIII, 352, 353, 357; X, 154–159, 214, 350, 371; XI, 348–351, 442, 491. *Old Amer. Proceedings*, 312, 397, 484, 487, 494, 522, 540, etc.—Tr.

With them mediumship is constitutional and congenital; their later initiation into spiritism furnishes them nothing essentially new, and only increases the exuberance of their automatic life, or opens up to them channels of specialized discharge, such as writing or typtology. But these "mediums by birth," so to say, are in the minority. The greater part of our mediums have become so at a later date and by reason of their environment; their powers have been acquired, and merely presuppose a latent predisposition. Some can never become mediums no matter how much they may desire it, while others acquire mediumship slowly, and after great effort and infinite patience on their part.

The Duration of Mediumship.—Swedenborg, having become a psychic at fifty-five years of age, remained so until his death, nearly thirty years later. Mrs. Piper and Eusapia Palladino preserved their powers for more than twenty years. With Stainton Moses, on the contrary, he maintained his mediumship eleven years only (from thirty-three to forty-four years of age), and he lived nine years after the loss of all his powers. That is to say, mediumship is of variable duration. . . . It is the same with congenital mediums; their power may be prolonged to the end of life or disappear at any period. . . . How many children have fits of somnambulism or waking visions, and seem predestined to become excellent mediums, but do not do so at all, the strengthening of their health having, by degrees, effaced this pre-

disposition to automatism and unified their personality. . . .

As to the influence of various physical and mental conditions upon the exercise of mediumship, my correspondents are unanimous in condemning, as absolute hindrances or at least grave obstacles to the production of phenomena, all such causes as physical exhaustion, and especially the psychical causes—disturbing emotions, uneasiness, absorbing thoughts, fatigue, innervation, etc. To sum up, the conditions required for the successful exercise of mediumistic powers are the same as for the voluntary exercise of any other power—a state of good health, nervous equilibrium, calm, the absence of cares, good humor, sympathetic surroundings, etc.[1] Several of the letters insist upon moral elevation, purity of conduct, noble aspirations, altruism, etc., saying that these things strengthen mediumship, while the lower sentiments, such as cupidity, pride, jealousy, etc., are the cause of much loss of power. Others have insisted that certain physical conditions have a propitious effect—silence, semi-obscurity, good ventilation, fasting, etc. We must add here that the inhibitions due to fatigue, cares, and emotions do not concern spontaneous phenomena, which, on the contrary, often appear to occur under the stimulus of organic and mental

[1] From this it may be seen a little more clearly, perhaps, why Eusapia Palladino failed to convince the conjurors and skeptics in this country, when practically all these conditions were denied her or were absent.—Tr.

troubles, their mission seeming to be to convey to the medium a remedy or a consolation.

Influence of Mediumship upon Character.—On this point there are very different views. If we believed some, mediumship possesses a marvelous power of transformation, the activity, powers, sentiments of the whole being become expanded; it impregnates the whole life and conduct of every day with the most precious virtues — goodness, charity, devotedness, courage or resignation, consecration to duty, tolerance and breadth of ideas, joy and constant serenity, confidence in the future, and a profoundly religious sense of our existence.

According to others, on the contrary, mediums are generally bilious, jealous, susceptible, proud, etc. In short, the picture of them which is drawn is that of the typical hysteric. It is obvious that, in view of this great diversity of opinion, no definite and lasting agreement can as yet be reached.

Termination of Mediumistic Power.—As I have said before, this varies greatly. Some mediums retain their powers all their lives. Others, on the contrary, lose them after a longer or shorter period, while in many cases—such as that of Eusapia Palladino—it is gradually lost over a period of years, or, on the contrary, suddenly wrecked by harsh methods of experimentation—as in the case of Mrs. Piper. On the whole, it may be said that the length of time in which mediumship is preserved by mediums is so varied that

no definite limit may be set in the present state of our knowledge.

Natural Types of Mediums.—Besides those cases of remarkable and powerful mediums who have inherited their mediumistic power or who have it all their lives, there are also mediums who develop it late in life, and who, after practising mediumship for some time, discard it as useless or valueless in their own case. A typical example of such a medium would be about as follows:

A person, ordinarily of the feminine sex, who has never experienced psychic phenomena (except, perhaps, a little somnambulism or day-dreams and some presentiments), experiences a great sorrow, such as the death of a dear one, and soon after attends a séance for the first time. She tries the table or automatic writing. Rapidly she becomes a typtological medium, or automatic writer, and obtains communications which do not surpass, in any way, her own capabilities, but which strike her and enchant her in the beginning by reason of their so-called emanation from the dead. Little by little, however, the monotony of the messages, their intrinsic mediocrity, the rarity or even the absence of all proof convincingly supernormal, sometimes the obsessional or lying character of the pretended revelations, deprive her of her first enthusiasm, and at the end of some months, or even years, the medium ceases to practise. Nothing is usually left to her either of good or evil as the result of this "phase" of mediumship except a certain

latent predisposition which renders her capable of practising mediumship with more or less ease whenever she tries; and at the basis of her nature a real inclination for spiritistic doctrines, with the desire to see them one day scientifically demonstrated.

CONCLUSION

There are some who find a real and daily satisfaction in conversing, by means of the table or the pen, with their departed relatives or friends, but for the great majority it is hardly so. What touches them personally in spiritism and matters the most for them is not the *phenomena*, but the *teaching* (said to be scientifically grounded) of the future life, in opposition to materialism, which denies it; to skepticism, which doubts it, or to religion, which makes it the object of a faith, always wavering. It is clear that this teaching, in order to have the character of absolute scientific certitude, implies experimental demonstrations—concrete and tangible proofs of the intervention of spirits in our world. But for the greater number of spiritists, this is already proved, for cultured people, just as much as the rotation of the earth; it is not necessary for every one to experiment and verify for himself these phenomena; it is sufficient to know that this has already been done—that is to say, they exist in the impersonal arsenal of science, where they are always available, to convince the incredulous. Were it not for the purpose of polemics and proselytism we should never have need to resort to spirit manifesta-

tions, because that which lives really is not the facts themselves, but the grand verities—philosophical and moral—which are deduced from them. In short, as one of my correspondents has excellently expressed it: "In spiritism *the doctrine is everything:* one can be a good spiritist without ever having seen phenomena; and these latter should never be sought for, except for the purposes of propaganda."

Needless to say, this is an attitude which psychology and modern science cannot share. My own reasons for thinking so are outlined in the chapters which follow.

II

F. W. H. MYERS AND SUBLIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

I. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

FREDERIC MYERS (1843–1901) was one of the most remarkable personalities of our time in the realm of mental science. "Dictionaries of Celebrities" may have some difficulty in classifying him. By his studies and his professional occupations [1] he belonged to literature; he was a profound connoisseur of classical antiquity, an essayist delicate and penetrating, a poet of high inspiration, and at his death he left a mass of literature which would have sufficed—according to competent judges—to assign him a place among the first writers of his time [2] if the employment of his leisure and the flights of his genius had not already rendered him more illustrious as a "psychical researcher." This category has not as yet figured in the classification of great men, but it will be necessary some day to introduce it, and Myers was

[1] Myers conscientiously fulfilled for almost thirty years the functions of inspector of schools at Cambridge.

[2] Doctor Leaf compares him to Ruskin, and considers him in some respects his peer.

MR. FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

the typical representative of this class—the most competent example, and, one might almost say, its true creator. He himself would not have admitted this, and, with his usual modesty, would have given the honor to his master, Henry Sidgwick, or his friend, Edmund Gurney, or to his numerous *collaborateurs*. But, in reality, in reading the works of Myers one is placed *au courant* with his career, and gains the impression that it is he himself who was the soul, the center, the supreme motive force in this scientific movement, founded to investigate those debatable phenomena which lie on the border-line of science, and which form the subject-matter of the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research.

It is to be hoped that some day a friendly pen will write the biography of Myers and the evolution of his thought. Meanwhile let us content ourselves with some sidelights which he has left us upon his thought and work.

Brought up in the English Church, he was a faithful member—"aggressively orthodox," to use his own words—until the age of that inevitable crisis, when, torn between an inextinguishable desire for certainty of a future life, and the inevitable weakening of his faith in traditional dogma, as well as in philosophical speculation, he went to confide his interior perplexities to Professor Sidgwick: "In a starlight walk which I shall not forget (December 3, 1869), I asked him, almost with trembling, whether he thought that when tradition, intuition, metaphysics had failed to

resolve the riddle of the universe there was still a chance that from any actual observable phenomena—ghosts, spirits, whatsoever there might be—some valid knowledge might be drawn as to a world unseen. Already, it seemed, he had thought that this was possible; steadily, though in no sanguine fashion, he indicated some last grounds of hope, and from that night onward I resolved to pursue this quest—if it might be, at his side."

This was the third of December, 1869. Myers was twenty-six years old. The primary aim of his life was henceforth fixed—the road which he had to travel for the third of a century—to the very end of his last breath, with an indomitable energy—*viz.*, to search in those abnormal and occult phenomena, disdained by official science, for proofs of facts in some measure tangible and irrefragible, of the spiritual nature of the soul, of its independence of the organism, of its survival after corporeal death. He proposed, in other words, to establish the *certainty* of another world, of another life—"the preamble of all religions"—no longer, as in the past, on the uncertain dogmas of the articles of faith or of abstract reasoning, but upon the unshakable foundation of an experimental demonstration rigorously scientific.

The undertaking was not easy. It was essential to have a strong heart and a well-balanced judgment to penetrate this medley of mysterious phenomena, where fraud, obscurity, illusion, repulse the seeker at every step. "But," as Richet remarked, "if Myers were

not a mystic, he had all the faith of a mystic and the ardor of an apostle, in conjunction with the sagacity and precision of a savant." The greatness of his effort—such as he conceived it—the vital importance which it assumed in his eyes, for the happiness and salvation of humanity sustained him. He said that if a spiritual world ever manifested to man, it must manifest now; and that, in consequence, a serious investigation must end by discovering some unmistakable signs of it in these obscure and rare phenomena. For, "if all attempts to verify scientifically the intervention of another world should be definitely proved futile, this would be a terrible blow, a mortal blow, to all our hopes of another life, as well as to traditional religion," for "it would thenceforth be very difficult for men to be persuaded, in our age of clear thinking, that what is now found to be illusion and trickery was in the past thought to be truth and revelation."

In order to understand the work of Myers it is necessary to remember this moral and religious side of his nature, this emotional strain, profoundly human, which was the fundamental note of his personality, the spring of all his intellectual activity. By means of intense application, seconded by an enormous power of work and exceptional brilliancy, he nevertheless forced himself to become the rigorous scientist; and in biology, psychology, and other sciences he possessed almost the knowledge of a specialist—added to which was a breadth of view, a vastness of horizon, great culture, and a daring

originality in philosophical thought—which is, alas, so lacking in many of our contemporary savants, who believe in the virtue of diplomas, or that they have reached the goal of their life and ambition because they have performed some novel experiments in a laboratory. But with Myers, though he became a savant, he was before all a complete man, vibrating with lofty aspirations, thirsty for absolute certainty of infinite affection and of life eternal; and, one might almost say, it was the ardent need of belief in him which brought forth in him this feeling of the necessity for knowledge.

During the early years of his work the efforts of Myers and Sidgwick were directed to cases of psychics and mediums such as they could find. These were crowned with but moderate success, and they often turned from the quest in disgust. The early years seem to have left upon them a very discouraging impression.[1] But things took a better turn with the founding of the Society for Psychical Research (S. P. R.) in 1882, when a galaxy of brilliant and distinguished men—professional savants and intellectual amateurs—were united, under Professor Sidgwick[2] as president, in the thought of applying scientific methods to the study of all these obscure phenomena—mesmerism, spiritism, apparitions, etc. Myers (who oc-

[1] "Tiresome and distasteful enough," said Myers, in speaking of his researches at this time (1872–76).

[2] Professor Sidgwick was for many years professor of moral philosophy in Cambridge, and the author of several standard works on ethics, political economy, etc.

cupied the weighty position of honorary secretary after the death of Gurney, in 1888) showed at once an immense activity. Of the sixteen volumes of *Proceedings* published in his lifetime there is not one which does not contain many important articles from his pen, without mentioning his participation in the celebrated work *Phantasms of the Living*, which contributed so much to awaken public interest. He also contributed largely to periodicals on the subject, such as the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Nineteenth Century*, etc.[1] To appreciate the enormous amount of energy which these writings imply, we should remember that many of them signify a vast amount of preliminary work—innumerable experiments and séances with mediums, examination and verification of documents, journeys, correspondence, etc. It was this kind of research which was needed in the existing state of apathy of the public; and that he undertook it, encountering often the ill-will of those whose cases he investigated, betokens rare qualities of will, tenacity of purpose, and perseverance, which Myers must have possessed in a high degree.[2] Without doubt he was

[1] Many of these essays were afterward collected in his volume *Science and a Future Life, and Other Essays*, London, 1893.

[2] I vividly remember one interesting trip in April, 1892, when I had the good fortune to take an Alpine tour with Myers and his brother, the late Dr. A. T. Myers, and Prof. William James, of Harvard. When climbing the mountain, psychology, as may well be imagined, was not forgotten in our conversations, and it happened that I quoted some phenomena of mental imagery in myself which I had noted. Myers saw in these recitals some possible support for his theories, and that evening, when we had arrived at the hotel and I was relaxing after our long climb, thinking only

admirably seconded by his colleagues in the S. P. R., but his were the hands which finally wove together the threads of the vast network of the investigation, and it was upon his shoulders that the principal burden lay. He played a large part, moreover, in organizing the International Congress of Psychology, especially that held in London in 1892, of which he was the general secretary. He was able to assist at the Congress of Psychology (April, 1900), and to present there the account of his experiences with Mrs. Thompson, who had finally confirmed him in his beliefs.

After having been for so many years at this work, Myers was finally honored. The S. P. R. called him, in 1900, to the presidential chair, reserved for professors or savants of the highest renown; Sidgwick, Balfour Stewart, A. J. Balfour, William James, and Sir William Crookes having preceded him. Alas, he did not long enjoy this distinction—one which he considered less a homage to himself than as a recognition of this young science which he had helped to create and to which he had given the best part of his life. But his strength was waning, and some months later

of how soon I could get to my bed, this awful man placed in my hands a piece of paper and a pencil, and would allow me no rest until I had written out my experiences in full, which he afterward incorporated in one of his articles on the "Subliminal Consciousness." I should like to add that this tenacious will—almost imperious—of Myers was equaled by a nobility of character, a moral elevation of purpose and of feeling, which all who came into contact with him perceived and retained as a lasting and imperishable memory.

(January 17, 1901) feeling his task achieved, he closed his eyes to the light of this world with the serenity of a man who has become absolutely certain of the existence of a future life—better than that, in the joy of a departure long expected and for which he had been waiting impatiently. As he wrote to one of his friends, "I am counting the days until the holidays."

2. THE POSTHUMOUS VOLUME OF MYERS [1]

As a crown of his life and of his work Myers left a manuscript, including, in a condensed and more systematical form than his former works, the result of his thirty years of labor. While unfinished, this posthumous work, the publication of which we owe to the pious care of Dr. Richard Hodgson and Miss Alice Johnson, is, however, well enough developed in its broad outlines for us to have a good idea of the complete thought of the author. His endeavor was to synthesize religion and science. . . . His book is divided into eight chapters, which are grouped, as it were, in twos, by virtue of their contents ("Disintegrations of Personality," especially Hysteria, and its extreme opposite, "Genius"; "Sleep" and "Hypnotism"; "Sensory Automatism," and "Phantasms of the Dead"; "Motor Automatism," and "Trance, Ecstasy, and Possession"). This represents a gradation by which Myers rises from morbid facts—which support

[1] *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, London and New York, 1903 (2 vols.).

his conception of our fundamental psychological structure—to the point where his demonstration culminates in the experimental manifestations of the discarnate and the phenomena of trance and possession.

It may be necessary here briefly to recall the central idea which he holds of our constitution.

For Myers, each of us is, in reality, a spiritual and permanent entity—let us say a "soul"—of which our ordinary personality, our conscious self, is only a small fragment which has been selected or differentiated from the remainder by the struggle for existence in the course of organic evolution on this planet. To use his favorite comparison: Just as the visible region of the solar spectrum, which is limited, is prolonged at either end—at one, as the infra-red rays; at the other, as ultra-violet—so our ordinary consciousness, the *supraliminal* consciousness—constitutes a small portion of our being best adapted to the actual conditions of terrestrial life, and our *subliminal* consciousness possesses two kinds of faculties which we have not at our voluntary disposal. These are, on one side, inferior faculties which belonged to our animal ancestors, but which our conscious personality has lost in the course of evolution, such as the power to direct and modify at will the physiological functions, nutrition, secretion, growth, etc. On the other side, there are superior faculties relating to an environment or to a mode of existence which is extra-terrestrial and of which our body does not permit us

the free exercise, but which appear occasionally, in flashes—in the supernormal phenomena of clairvoyance, lucidity, prophecy, etc. Our real individuality, our complete and total self—our soul, in a word—infinitely surpasses what is revealed to the empirical consciousness in the waking state; on one side we plunge our roots into the obscure intimacy of our tissues and our organic functions, and we participate, on the other hand, in a higher order of phenomena—of a *metethereal* world, as Myers called it—that is to say, transcendental and spiritual, existing beyond this universe and bathed in the ether of the physicists.

We must further note that between our ordinary consciousness (the supraliminal) and our latent consciousness (the subliminal) there are perpetual changes and fluctuations along their border; the level of separation is not constant; the partition is not impervious; the threshold is not fixed between these parts of our being; there occur phenomena of osmosis from one to the other, of mingling, as between liquids of varying density, when the bottle is shaken. Constantly, *e.g.*, we forget many things, only to see them reappear in a dream or access of fever, which proves that these memories were not lost, but only passed from the conscious self into the subliminal memories. And constantly, also, messages are sent from our subliminal regions to our personal consciousness, carrying with them, in the most diverse forms (as sensory automatisms) contents of the most varied value—visual hallucinations, auditory hallucinations,

submerged ideas, emotions, irrational impulses, etc. Sometimes insignificant reminiscences or future caprices of the imagination are thus sent; sometimes inspirations of genius and veridical revelations which defy all scientific explanation and which indicate the existence of supernormal faculties by reason of which we belong to a metethereal or transcendental world. In short, human personality is, so to say, composed of an infinite number of strata, of which the upper strata, which pass singly into the light of our ordinary consciousness, rest upon hidden and still deeper strata, which in turn reach down to mysterious depths and enable us to communicate with unsuspected realms. But all these strata are of a nature more or less fluid and permit currents of exchange between them, interpenetration or invasion one by another. And the geological accidents on the crust of the earth are not more formidable in their way than the cataclysms which sometimes destroy the psychic equilibrium, metamorphosing the individual, and causing changes of identity, etc. But we must not press these various analogies, to which Myers had recourse to illustrate his idea of the subliminal self and of its relations to the ordinary self too far. Metaphors must not make us forget the nature of the facts themselves.

Let us return now to the argument of the author. *Disintegrations of personality*—that is to say, obsessions, fixed subconscious ideas, hypnoid phenomena, secondary states of consciousness, and other conditions of psychological disruption which medical ob-

servations have proved to exist for some years past—all these strange psychic alterations are easily explained by the theory of the subliminal consciousness, which at the same time bespeak in its favor. One sees, indeed, that if the ordinary self is only a fragment—a portion, more or less mobile and unstable, of a larger individuality from which it is differentiated—it might undergo a regressive process, inverse to the process of evolution which gave birth to it. Morbid cases of degeneration thus afford another proof of his doctrine of the constitution of our being; and the degree of *rapport*, constantly varying, which might exist between our various personalities in the subjacent strata, appear to him to offer a psychopathological explanation which is not wanting in originality. It is thus that *hysteria*, in particular, suggested to him the idea that it consisted of "an exaggerated penetrability of the psychical diaphragm"—creating a state of great confusion between the ordinary self and certain diseased strata, which assume certain functions which ought to be performed by the former, and impose on them, in revenge, their irrational auto-suggestions. This psychological conception of this major neurosis, developed by Myers in 1892, in consequence of the early work of Pierre Janet, permitted him to see in hysteria a morbid condition of the hypnotic stratum—instead of making hypnotism a part of hysteria, which was the usual view at that time.

Genius, in its turn, rests also upon an exceptional

permeability of the psychical diaphragm; but this is now between the ordinary self and subliminal strata which are sound and healthy, sometimes endowed with supernormal faculties, which erupt into the ordinary personality, to its great advantage, accomplishing results which it would have been incapable of performing itself. As a typical example of this view, Myers insisted that arithmetical prodigies are examples of this uprush, and that selection and heredity are powerless to explain these phenomena. He held that "biological variation" is only a subterfuge employed to conceal our ignorance of subliminal activities and powers, until now incomprehensible. The Platonic theory of remembrance might have explained them by the memory of the multiplication table learned in some former existence. Without going so far as that, Myers sees in them a proof that we belong, in our subliminal consciousness, to some invisible world where the multiplication table is, so to say, "in the air." All that spontaneous variation does is to cause an accidental manifestation, through certain privileged organisms, of these latent mathematical faculties, which the struggle for existence, in the course of this planetary evolution, has not yet developed in our supraliminal consciousness, but which subsists, none the less, in the subjacent parts of our being, ready to surge upward as soon as a favorable cerebral change furnishes the occasion for it. This chapter of Myers is certainly one of the most remarkable and the strongest of his work, be-

cause it makes one feel the insufficiency—one might almost say the foolishness—of all the "naturalistic" explanations which have been advanced up to the present to explain genius.

Sleep naturally supplies to Myers a rich harvest of facts in support of his doctrine. He sees there a phase of a special state in which our being, abandoning its supraliminal functions, recruits its strength in the metetheric world, the source of all energy.[1] Thus is explained on the one hand the effect of this marvelous recuperation — the general vitalization of the organism—which is the property of sleep, and, on the other hand, the occasional appearance of faculties superior to those of the waking state, which one observes so often in dreams or hypnotic phenomena, in excitations of memory, imagination, even in reasoning, and sometimes the appearance of supernormal phenomena, prophetic dreams, revelations, etc. All these extraordinary facts seem to indicate "that the

[1] This is almost exactly the idea which I advanced, from the physiological standpoint, in my *Vitality, Fasting, and Nutrition* (p. 309). I there said: ". . . Sleep is that physiological condition of the organism in which the nervous system of the individual (in precisely the same manner as the electric storage battery) is being recharged from without, by the external, all-pervading, cosmic energy in which we are bathed and in which we live and move and have our being." In fact, the theory of human vitality which I there advanced, and its relation to the bodily organism (pp. 225–303), is virtually an application of James's "transmission theory" of consciousness (see his *Human Immortality*) to the *whole* of our life and vital energy. And I showed in considerable detail that such a theory conforms to all the known facts of physiology as well as explaining many facts which the current materialistic theory cannot.—Tr.

self of sleep is a spirit freed from ordinary material limitations, and this conclusion conforms to the hypothesis that we live in *two worlds*; the waking personality is adapted to the needs of terrestrial life, the personality of sleep maintains the fundamental connection between the spiritual world and the organism, so as to provide the latter with energy while developing itself by the exercise of its spiritual powers."

This view finds additional confirmation in *hypnotism*, which is an experimental development of sleep, having for its object an increase of the subliminal vitalization of the organism. In spite of innumerable modern works we are still ignorant of *how* and *why* hypnotic procedures produce their effects; we are only enabled to say that they are all produced by suggestion, which Myers defined as a "successful appeal to the subliminal self." But this subliminal activity itself remains as a whole capricious and unintelligible. We are reduced to state its empirical effects, and here Myers shows that suggestion is the central curative factor in all old and new methods of cure, religious or otherwise; and, further, that the curative power invariably resides in the individual, and is not imparted from without. "Beneath the threshold of waking consciousness," as Myers said in another place (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., Vol. XIV, p. 107), "there lies, not merely an unconscious complex of organic processes, but an intelligent vital control. To incorporate that profound control with our waking

will is the great evolutionary end which hypnotism, by its group of empirical artifices, is beginning to help us to attain."

"It is not true," cried Myers, *a propos* of the miracles of Lourdes, "that a bottle of water from a spring near which a girl saw a hallucinatory figure of the Virgin will, by miraculous virtue, heal a Turk in Constantinople; but it *is* true that on some influx from the unseen world—an influence dimly adumbrated in that Virgin figure and that sanctified spring—depends the life and energy of this world of every day." And the true explanation of this vitalization is found, according to Myers, only in this hypothesis of a world of spiritual life or cosmic energy (they are both one to him) by which our existences are fed. The efficacy, either therapeutic or ethical, of auto-suggestion depends upon the employment of some artifice by means of which the subliminal attention, being directed to a corporeal function or to a moral end, reaches a sufficiently elevated degree to imbibe a new fund of energy from the metethereal world.

These first four chapters, while they reinterpret many facts from that author's particular point of view, do not touch upon the great question of human survival, which was, nevertheless, the author's main interest. It is in the four following chapters that such proof is adduced; and here Myers has erected a magnificent edifice of facts, with detail and ramification so great that it would be impossible for me to do more than

refer to the three most essential points in this place. These three points are:

First, the establishment of telepathy between the living by means of experiment and the observation of veridical hallucinations. The late researches of Gurney, Myers, and Podmore (in *Phantasms of the Living*), then the striking results of the great "Census of Hallucinations" in 1894, as well as a vast number of isolated cases; finally, the varied cases of transmission of thought, mental suggestion at a distance, etc., proved to Myers the reality of telepathy. Further, Myers was convinced that this telepathy was not a species of physical vibration of any sort, known or unknown. The facts proved, he believed, that the soul can function on occasion separately from its body; that certain segments, for example, of the agent's subliminal consciousness, dissociated from the rest yet attached to the organism, can impress at a distance the nervous centers of the percipient, or his soul, even (*psychical invasion*), and enter into immediate *rapport* at other times with the material world, thereby either obtaining direct knowledge (as in the case of "second sight," traveling clairvoyance, etc.), or to act upon it, and there determine a local psychical center (*phantasmogenetic center*) which would be able, in its turn, to influence the persons present within a certain radius, and thus give a case of "collective hallucination." These conceptions appear far-fetched, it is true, when thus given in a few words and without their context, but they ap-

pear almost natural as elaborated by the pen of Myers.

We are thus naturally led to the *second* step in the argument. Once admit, says Myers, that personality may be liberated from its material organism, in order to invade the soul or the nervous centers of another, and there is nothing opposed to the view that this personality may persist after the death of the body, and in turn influence those still in the body. Telepathy—proved in the living—is probably the means of communication between the living and the dead. Facts—since collected—have converted this possibility into a certainty. Already certain veridical hallucinations had suggested to him the idea that they had originated in a dead, rather than a living, operator. . . . *Finally*, the most definite and conclusive proofs of this intervention of the discarnate are forthcoming in the case of Mrs. Piper and others where we apparently see the usurpation of a living organism by a deceased person.

The independence of the soul and the body being thus established by the phenomena of telepathy, and its survival by those of possession, one rises quite naturally to the summit of the edifice—to the scientifico-philosophico-religious synthesis which consists in raising telepathy, or direct intercommunication of souls, to the dignity of universal law, of a supreme cosmic truth, reuniting all beings, incarnate and discarnate, living in this world or in others, in a splendid universe of moral and spiritual life. Seen from this

height, the painful isolation of human personality, which seems to us irremediably separated by the impassable barrier of the body in this planetary existence, is only an appearance—a relative truth of an inferior order. Reality to them is immediate and complete communion, which is already realized unknowingly here below in the profounder strata of our subliminal consciousness. The Church had a presentiment of this truth in its dogma of the "communion of saints"; but it was incumbent upon modern science to establish it upon the solid base of experimental method, and rigorously to demonstrate these great ideas which were the patrimony of all religions and which signify the most profound aspirations of humanity—duty, prayer, and life eternal. . . .

CONCLUSION

I epitomize and I conclude. It is well to distinguish between subliminal psychology, as such, and the philosophico-religious system which Myers tried to outline.

We cannot foretell, at the present time, what the future has reserved for the spiritistic doctrine of Myers. If future discoveries confirm his thesis of the intervention of the discarnate, in the web and the woof of our mental and physical worlds, then his name will be inscribed in the golden book of the initiated, and, joined to those of Copernicus and Darwin, he will complete the triad of geniuses who have the most profoundly revolutionized scientific thought, in the order,

Cosmological, Biological, Psychological. If, on the contrary, the veil which he tried to raise again falls; if the brilliant perspective of experimental metapsychics, carrying into the beyond the objective and impersonal proceedings of science, should find itself only a deceiving mirage—an optical illusion—in which he mistook for revelations from beyond the tomb what was, in reality, only the fiendish by-play of the subliminal self; if, in a word, it is necessary to renounce, not survival (which is another matter), but the scientific demonstration of survival, then this would be the annihilation of all his aims and his efforts.

But let us not forget that even in this case his truly scientific work, so far from being ruined, would persist intact, for it was only by following this idea of his that the ultimate truth was brought to light. It appears to me, indeed, that if ever we succeed in dissipating the illusions and discovering the truth in these mysterious realms of occult phenomena, it will be only by following the path shown us by Myers, and in pursuing this investigation as suggested by him; and we may rest assured that, no matter what its ultimate outcome, his name will always be honorably attached to it as the founder of "subliminal psychology."

III

"DECEIVING SPIRITS"

THE object of this chapter is the analysis of some of the mediumistic communications which I have gathered in the course of my inquiry in order to show that they are a pure product of the subconscious imagination of the medium working upon memories and under the influence of latent ideas of various kinds. (I do not pretend to say that this generalization can be universally applied; I only say that those cases which came under my own personal observation, and which spiritists attributed to "deceiving spirits," were only the work of the subconsciousness of the medium.)

My non-spiritistic readers, or those trained in psychology, will say, without doubt, that there is nothing new here, and again reproach me for pushing open doors already open. They hardly realize how little certain truths, to them self-evident, are known to the public—from which the majority of spiritists come. *They* invariably contend that there is always a wide gulf between the mere *possibility* of such a hypothesis and its *proof*. It is easy to claim that such messages have a purely endogenous source, including

nothing which proceeds from without; but to establish it with evidence is another thing. Indeed, the great mass of messages remain inexplicable; and it is only by taking the unwarranted stand that such messages cannot possibly have a source outside the medium that we are enabled to affirm, *a priori*, that all such messages originate within the medium, and must of necessity do so. But this dogmatic fashion of procedure has its inconveniences, and it would be more in conformity with a sane inductive method to demonstrate, by means of concrete examples taken from life, the thesis in question—*viz.*, that the subconscious "ego" of the medium is capable of forging even those parts of the mediumistic productions which present the greatest appearance of coming from the spirit world, and that it does not do it by accident. It does not suffice for this demonstration to call it hypnosis or hysteria, or to explain the so-called messages from the discarnate by the power of personification ("objectification of types," of Richet), or the tendency to dissociation, of which these special states offer us striking examples. For the physicians and the psychologists this reconciliation is, without doubt, convincing; they find scarcely any difficulty in correlating the mediumistic messages with the automatisms of a hysterical or hypnotized subject. But it is quite otherwise with the majority. . . . Induction and analogy do not enable us to classify under one head these morbid phenomena with the mysterious powers employed by certain individuals who appear other-

wise to enjoy the best of health. Right or wrong, the great public, which supplies the spiritists and occultists of our epoch, refuses to see anything of hysteria or of auto-hypnotization in the exploits of mediums; there are not wanting men of science, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, who share this repugnance, and are more inclined to consider the major neuroses particular cases of degeneracy—pathological counterfeits of the mediumistic genius—rather than the reverse. That is why it is better to study mediumship *directly*, analyzing its special conditions and apparent phenomena, without introducing into it points of view derived from other chapters of psycho-pathology. There will always be time enough later on for comparisons and the weaving of theories.

The two great obstacles which we encounter when we wish to demonstrate the purely psychological genesis of a mediumistic communication are: *first*, the ignorance in which one generally finds one's self with regard to the contents of the consciousness and subconsciousness of the subject at the moment of the delivery of the message; and, *secondly*, the difficulty of eliminating the participation of occult causes—always possible by hypothesis. It necessitates, in fact, in order to be complete, our showing, first, that the contents of the message have been derived from the medium, and that they have not come from elsewhere.

Now, the first point supposes a knowledge of the individuality of the medium, and of the minute de-

tails of his psychic life, which we are far from possessing in the majority of cases; we must have a combination of fortunate chances in order that the information as to his past, his character, his stock of preoccupations, etc., as to his whole being, in fact, may supply us with the necessary elements to give us a satisfactory explanation of the messages which he has given us.

As for the second point, it is impossible to be satisfied directly and completely, since it is impossible to prove a negative. However, if we can prove that the message actually came from the medium himself there is no longer any necessity of appealing to the "spirit world" for our explanation of this fact. To attribute, *i.e.*, to a deceiving spirit—as the spiritists often do—lying communications which could be explained by the disposition of the subject is to sin against the methodological principle, which does not allow us to multiply causes without necessity. However little we may find in a medium to account for a message, we must assume that it comes from him, and not postulate an outside intelligence operating through him. . . . And if spiritists insist that they *may* appeal to deceiving spirits in spite of all this, they abandon the scientific platform to which they so constantly appeal, in proof of their evidence. . . . Naturally, conditions such as those required to prove the case are seldom realized. The value of the following cases, therefore, lies in the fact that this, their true genesis, has been practically traced and shown to be due to normal psychological

processes. With this I pass to an account of the cases themselves.

I. THE CASE OF MME. DUPOND

This case, so clearly one of lying communications, announcing the death of some one who was afterward proved to be still alive, has been succinctly described by Mme. Dupond in her reply to my inquiry. I publish it at length, as I published it some ten years ago in the *Philosophical Review*, but with added details on account of its interest.

Mme. Dupond, of Geneva, aged sixty-three. Learned and highly educated; literary tastes; philosophical and religious interests. Of good health; no phenomena outside the spiritistic crisis of which we speak. There are in her family some signs of hereditary mediumship; one of her brothers and her father have had prophetic dreams, and her son has cultivated automatic writing with success.

In 1881, at the age of forty-five, she became interested in spiritism. She read Allen Kardec, Gibier, etc., and for one month took part in the séances of table-tipping, without much result. She then tried automatic writing, and, at the end of eight days (April 21), obtained the names of departed friends and her parents, with philosophico-religious messages, which continued for some days. On the 24th of April, as she had already written various communications, her pencil suddenly traced the name, quite unex-

pectedly, of a M. Rudolph . . . a young Frenchman of her acquaintance recently entered into a religious order of Italy. As she had not heard that he had died, she was profoundly surprised, but her hand continued to write a confirmation of the sad news, as follows:

"I am Rudolph; I died at 11 o'clock this evening (April 23). You must believe what I tell you. I am happy. I have finished my work. I have been sick for some days, and I could not write. I had a hemorrhage of the lungs, caused by a cold, which came suddenly. I died without suffering, and I have thought much of you. I have left orders as to your letters. I died at X——, far from Dom Bruno. . . . Your father brought me to you; I did not know we could communicate thus. I am very happy. . . . A little before my death I called to me the professor of Oratory; I gave him your letters, begging him to return them to you; he will do so. After communion I said good-by to my colleagues. I was peaceful; I did not suffer; but life gradually became extinct. The passage of death resembled that of sleep. I awakened near God, near parents and friends; it was beautiful, wonderful; I was happy and free. I have thought all the time of those who loved me, and I should have liked to speak to them, but I could not communicate with them. I remain with you, and I see you, but I only notice your spirit. . . . I am attached to you. Do not fear that I love you less

because I am no longer on earth. I am in space. I see your parents, and I love them also. Adieu; I go to pray for you. I am no longer Catholic; I am Christian."

After the first astonishment Mme. Dupond could not help believing in it, and seeing in this a decisive proof of spiritism, especially when, the following day, she continued to receive communications from Rudolph, making numerous allusions to their past friendship, etc. These mediumistic conversations lasted daily for almost a week, but on the 30th of April the arrival, by post, of a letter from Rudolph—who, far from being dead, was in perfect health—threw cold water on her newly formed spiritistic convictions and discouraged her from following these experiments, which were so disconcerting. Since then, though continuing to interest herself in spiritism, she threw aside all practical mediumship, and never again tried to write automatically.

Mme. Dupond believed that this period of spiritual communication with the pretended Rudolph lasted at least a month, although the documents only show that it lasted six days (April 24–30). . . . This period proved the most remarkable in her life; the thought of the said Rudolph and his invisible presence, the singular impression of being continually seen by him in all that she did, had become a veritable "obsession" (to use her own words), to the point that she was surprised to find herself constantly tracing the letter "R" in the air with her index finger.

The spiritistic phase of Mme. Dupond constitutes on the whole only a passing distraction of short duration in the midst of an existence otherwise perfectly normal. It is an example of episodic mediumship, which is continued in permanent mediumship. If this unexpected enchantment had not been cut short, or if the contents of the message had remained uncontradicted, this case would be truly typical and would serve to represent many others. But its principal interest lies in the fact that the pretended communications of Rudolph are explained, so to say, in the greatest detail, by reason of the information which Mme. Dupond, intelligent and observing woman as she is, has furnished me.

It was during a visit to the Midi the preceding spring that she made the acquaintance of Rudolph, who was not yet a priest. He returned to Italy, where he passed the winter for his delicate health, and he spent some days in the same hotel as she. Their conversations at the table soon changed to a lasting and intimate friendship, founded upon great similarity of temperament.

Although Mme. Dupond was a Protestant and a convinced republican, and he, on the other hand, was an ardent Catholic, they had the same ideal aspirations, the same interest in higher things. Their hereditary divergences only added to the attraction and piquancy of their conversation. Mme. Dupond felt herself little by little seized with almost maternal tenderness toward this young man of twenty years,

whose education seemed to fit him for a brilliant worldly career, but whom rare elevation of soul and mystic tendencies urged toward taking holy orders—by reason of the influence recently exercised upon him by an eminent Italian preacher, Padre Dom Bruno; and she undertook to convert him to her religious faith. He, on his side, touched by this friendship of a woman who might have been his mother, responded to it by giving her his entire confidence, but not without attempting, in his turn, to bring her to his convictions. When, at the end of some days, he had to leave, their conversations continued by means of correspondence, but their attempts at reciprocal proselytism remained inefficacious on both sides. Some months later the influence of Dom Bruno completely prevailed over that of Mme. Dupond, and Rudolph became associated with a religious order in the environs of Turin, under the direction of this father. Mme. Dupond consoled herself by dreaming of the invisible church which would reunite all souls sincerely Christian—above barriers of dogma and minor differences of creed. This step of Rudolph's did not cause any immediate cessation of their correspondence, and it was he who owed a letter to his friend when the spiritual communication was received.

These details are necessary to make the reader understand the place which Rudolph had taken in the sentimental and intellectual life of Mme. Dupond. . . . But it is evident that the solicitude which Mme. Dupond felt for her young friend was still

deep, and ready to awaken on the slightest occasion.

I may, perhaps, represent the situation in which Mme. Dupond found herself as follows: For some weeks she had been entirely wrapped up in spiritism, and she had been anxious to obtain convincing proof from the other side. For three days she had been receiving messages from her departed parents; what would be more natural than to suppose that this success had awakened in her the desire and expectation of seeing the number and variety of her invisible correspondents increase? On the other hand, exterior circumstances, a sudden fall in the temperature (more noticeable because it immediately followed a warm spell of spring), might well have given her apprehensions for those of her acquaintances whose health might suffer from this dangerous return to winter. Now would not this apprehension be particularly keen for the young man whom she knew to be delicate in the chest, and from whom she had received no letter? Had some misfortune happened to him?

It is clear that the idea of the possible death of Rudolph, with its concomitant circumstances and its consequences, might at least have influenced the thoughts of Mme. Dupond, especially in view of her feeling for him. . . . Would not any mother or spiritual adviser have become more or less agitated in view of the situation?

And amid the multitude of thoughts, reasonings,

fears, and suppositions to which such a thought would give birth, would not one fall inevitably upon Rudolph? Assuredly the date and the hour of his decease remain unexplained (like so many things in our dreams or the caprices of our thoughts), because we are unable to trace all the ramifications and unravel all the confused threads of our associations of ideas. . . . But, with the exception of these insignificant details, all the contents of these communications of Rudolph can be seen to follow, as a sort of logical necessity, from the idea which his friend had of him; or constitute, as it were, a natural response to the ideas which haunted her. His illness, due to the sudden cold, which explained his inability to write to Mme. Dupond; his adieus to earthly life, worthy of his sincere belief; the care which he took that the correspondence of his heretic friend (slightly compromising to her from the double point of view of the sentimental note and the useless controversies against the influence of Dom Bruno), his passage to and his awakening in the other world, described in a manner absolutely in conformity with the spiritistic conceptions which then reigned in the religious life of Mme. Dupond; the memory of his earthly relations to her, and his manner of judging them now, in full accord with the sentiments which she had of him, right or wrong; everything, in a word, in this series of messages reflects the attitude (conscious or not) of Mme. Dupond, and corresponds exactly to what would naturally take place within her. She alone, there-

fore, and by no means Rudolph (even supposing that he had been dead at the moment), was the source of these communications.

It is here that arises, it is true, the hypothesis of "lying spirits," that ingenious expedient which allows spiritism to explain such communications flatly contradicted by the facts. In this particular case Mme. Dupond thought for long (and she is still a little inclined, I think) to believe that this was really some deceiving spirit from the other side who had played her this trick. In one sense, and taking "the other side" to include all that goes beyond clear consciousness, she was right, and was evidently the victim of a villainous deceit, for which she herself was not at all responsible. There is nothing against the idea that we might give the name "spirit" to an unknown psychic complex which unites into one whole a plurality of psychic ideas, states, and feelings below the threshold of consciousness. . . . The question is, whether this "psychic self" is really external to the medium (as spiritists assert and as Mme. Dupond herself is at times inclined to believe), or whether it is not within herself and the personality which, manifested in these messages, was not a purely temporary function—a projection or momentary creation of her being—such as the creations of our dreams, with which we speak and hold conversations?

There is no doubt as to the reply. If we admit that the author of the pseudo-messages of Rudolph may be another being than Mme. Dupond herself, we must

grant that this spirit was marvelously familiar with all that Mme. Dupond thought at that moment—her conscience, her memories, sentiments, tendencies, etc., concerning Rudolph. "He" was able to choose, in order to compose his lying messages, precisely the ideas which best agreed with those she herself held as to her young friend—the impressions which she had preserved of him, the contents of the correspondence exchanged between them, etc. This clever forger, in other words, had extracted from Mme. Dupond, in order to disguise himself the better, all the complex and systematic ideas—the composite picture, in short—which she possessed of him. . . . He only reproduced, in fact, the image of the young priest as it floated before her mind. . . . But if this is so, how does this spirit differ from Mme. Dupond herself? What is the meaning of this independent individuality which is only an echo, a reflection, a fragment of another? And what good this duplication of the original? Is it not puerile and absurd to invent, in order to explain a synthesis and a psychological co-ordination, another real substantial principle of synthesis and co-ordination—another individual or spirit, in a word—which contains the identical grouping of elements of the same nature as the writer herself? Without doubt, from the metaphysical point of view, in the last analysis the organic and psychic individual remains a mystery; we cannot understand absolutely why or how synthesis or analysis is effected; why dreams should be constructed as they are, or why

the subconscious mind plays the comedy of deceiving spirits in a medium. But even though the ultimate explanation of things escape us, that does not prevent us from accepting only those explanations which are least removed from the facts of science; and all that we can attribute to the personality of the medium *should* be attributed to him, and not thought to belong to another being external to him.

The real correspondence of Mme. Dupond and Rudolph, after having existed for some months, finally and suddenly ceased. It is clear that his entry into holy orders had deepened the gulf between them, which now became impassable, which would render useless and tiresome the continuation of their correspondence. It was without doubt the presentiment of this inevitable issue which inspired in the subconscious imagination of Mme. Dupond its deceiving messages, in which are reflected much less her fears and her solicitude for the health of her friend than a secret desire for his death. If this return of winter should carry him off, and he should leave this world, far from Dom Bruno, "after having returned me my letters, this would be finally the terrestrial climax most to be desired for our actual relations, to which would succeed, by reason of spiritism, a purely spiritual relation much more intimate, where nothing could hinder Rudolph from being once more everything to me."

Such is the schematic formula which appears to me to express the confused sentiments or the submerged

complex of emotional feelings and ideas, in which the personifying tendency, unfolding itself freely in the state of mediumistic passivity, has drawn the communications of the departed to respond to the intimate desires of Mme. Dupond.

2. THE CASE OF M. TIL

[Here follows, in the original, the case of M. Til, which has been given elsewhere, pp. 194–201 in this volume.]

3. THE CASE OF M. BERTIN

The dictations obtained through the pencil, or by means of the table, at spiritistic séances are divided into three groups as to their scientific interest: *First*, the greater part do not present much; they contain only simple scribbles or unfinished typtological spellings or communications; and they constitute only a loss of time and create a sense of boredom and weariness for the impartial observer, who finds nothing in them which he can believe, nothing to glean from their contents, which are, at times, incoherent or vague; at others they represent only vague ideas or facts of public notoriety. *Second*, other messages, on the contrary, attesting (by their surprising and veridical revelations) the reality of supernormal powers (telepathy, clairvoyance, intervention of spirits, etc.) will be an inestimable prize for the philosopher, to whom they will open the most secret mysteries of nature. *Third*, there are presented some communications

which have the air of being of no value, and whose absurdity and falsity cause the spiritists to attribute them to the intervention of deceiving and lying spirits; but an attentive examination of their contents and the circumstances of their production enables us to discover the operation of hidden processes and laws of our nature which are of the utmost importance.

The following case is a good example of the latter class. The incident in question occurred at a séance at which were present four persons—one a secretary, who did not touch the table. The three others were the mediums—non-professional—a lady thirty-four years of age, a spiritist without fanaticism; Mlle. C——, theosophist, at whose house this séance took place, and third, a gentleman sixty years of age, whom I shall call M. Bertin, a literary man and a professor of rare and penetrating mind, skeptically interested in these curiosities of human nature. It was from him that I received the following recital upon my asking him for it:

"We sat round the table, which almost immediately began to move with great energy, and we had almost at once communications from a dead lady, which were of no especial interest. We then rested for a few moments to chat, our hands still resting on the table. The medium told me, among other things, that I had a considerable amount of 'fluid,' very agreeable to her, while there were certain persons whose 'fluid' was unpleasant to her. I asked her in what manner

this 'fluid' manifested itself to her. 'It is a sort of very light current of air,' she replied to me. Then she said, suddenly, 'Some one is here again!' And, indeed, the table began to move about with great violence, and rapped out these words:

"'Bertin, Bertin, my friend!'

"'Who is there?'

"'Alexander.'

"'Alexander who? Tell me your family name.'

"As I sought in my memory for some one whose name was Alexander, the table rapped 'D,' which awoke in me the memory of Alexander Dufour, dead for some years. But the spelling continued with an 'E,' and finished by saying *Devinez!* The ladies asked me if I did not know an Alexander. I replied that I knew two, still living, whom I had seen recently. For each of them the table replied by two energetic blows, which, in the telegraphic language of spirits, signified 'No.' At this moment the medium said to me:

"'It must be some one very excited.'

"This word excited me, and made me think in a moment of my cousin Alexander G——, secluded for about twenty years in a lunatic asylum abroad.

"'Is it my cousin?' I asked.

"The table rapped one single blow, meaning 'Yes,' so violently that we thought the foot of the table was broken; then it flung itself against me, pressing me with such force that I was obliged to draw back the arm-chair in which I was seated.

"'But my cousin lives still!' I said.
"'No, no!'
"'Is he dead?'
"'Yes!'
"'When did he die?'
"'He is dead!'
"'Is it months or years?'
"No reply; nothing further, and the medium said to us, 'There is no longer any one here; I sense it.'"

I ought to say that the nature of this dialogue, even though I do not believe in these communications, awoke in me a good deal of emotion, the reason being that this cousin was in a lunatic asylum, and was being paid for year after year by money which, if the patient died, would come to M. Bertin. Nevertheless, subsequent investigation showed that the patient was still in good physical health; the table had lied.

Some time before M. Bertin had dreamed that this cousin of his had died; and the subconscious remembrance of this dream had doubtless remained, ready to emerge in a dream or in the mediumistic communications of the table. Under the circumstances it would be a saint indeed who did not at times desire the death of the hopelessly insane patient, since his heritage would, at his death, pass to M. Bertin. We have in these essential elements the conditions *par excellence* for the formation of a dream, and we need but recall the formula of Freud in his

book, so profound and ingenious, as to the possible interpretations of dreams:[1]

"All dreams are the fulfilment, more or less disguised, of a suppressed wish." What M. Bertin wished, in spite of himself, was naturally the death of his cousin for his own sake (nobody wishes gratuitously the death of another); but there was also the inheritance, which was so slow in coming. This suppressed wish became symbolized in the idea of death, and found expression in the movements of the table. The dictation of the table is, therefore, nothing more than the manifestation of the suppressed wish, under the guise of a communication from the patient in question.

I may add that this typtological message agrees marvelously with the theory of Freud (that our dreams are always disguised realizations of suppressed wishes), though I do not thereby conclude that this theory has the unlimited explanatory power which the famous Viennese psychopathologist has accorded it.[2]

[1] Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, Leipzig, 1900.

[2] Dr. Morton Prince has shown, in a brilliant article in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (October–November, 1910, pp. 139–195), that this theory of Freud is open to several weighty objections, and that often the dream represents "the expression of the *non*-fulfilment of a wish; some seem to be the fulfilment of a fear or an anxiety; some that of emotional aspirations; some that of the dreamer's dominating attitude of mind, etc." (p. 151). Thus, in one case, the dream seemed to represent "her idea of life in general, and of the moral precepts with which she endeavored to inspire herself and which she has endeavored to live up to, in order to obtain happiness" (p. 160). Doctor Prince elsewhere (p. 186) showed that there is a true analogy between

4. THE CASE OF MME. ZORA

The publication of the cases of M. Til and Mme. Dupond, in 1899, promptly brought upon me various protestations from convinced spiritists, who thought that my psychological interpretations of these cases were too complicated, and were not as complete as the classical explanation of deceiving spirits. One of these protestations, coming from one who had answered my inquiry—Mme. Zora—appeared to me particularly interesting, because its principal argument consisted in furnishing me with a new example in favor of my theory—*viz.*, a lying communication (proceeding from a so-called spirit yet living), the genesis of which might easily be constructed in the imagination of the medium. Here is the case:

"It is always a surprise," wrote Mme. Zora, "to see how varied opinions may differ upon one document. Another thing astonishes me still more; it is that one takes so much pains to seek every means possible of avoiding the belief of relations with the other world, which appears to me so natural, so simple, and so logical. Permit me to send you two examples. Certainly, these two cases, chosen *ad hoc*,

dreams and various other forms of hallucinatory symbolism, and that in many cases there is no good evidence of the existence of a "psychic censor," etc., upon which Freud places so much stress. This article, and the subsequent correspondence between Doctor Prince and Doctor Jones in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, should be read by all those interested in this question of the interpretation of dreams.—TR.

are well worthy of your criticism. In the case of M. Til, he was followed by a thought which haunted him; for when one is followed by an idea so tormenting as the possible culpability of one's child the anguish exaggerates the imagination to unheard-of proportions, so much so that this uneasiness may take the form of a voice, and become personalized; this is a fact well known among mothers. As for the case of Mme. Dupont, your reasoning is much less convincing; the hypothesis of deceiving spirits is much better in that case. I should like to send you a personal proof of this hypothesis."

[Briefly, the case is this: Eleven years before, Mme. Zora had known an old lady, then eighty years of age, whom she had seen much of at that time. She had not, however, thought about her for years. Her own hand announced the death of this lady, reminded her of their previous conversations, etc.; but subsequent investigation proved that this old lady had not died until two months *after* the message had been received. Also, associated with this, was a message received through another medium, which stated that her husband, who had gone to live in the tropics, and from whom she had not heard for a year, had died of yellow fever. This proved true. Professor Flournoy considers, however, that this apprehension might have been telepathically handed on by Mme. Zora to the medium. It remains to be explained why the old lady, whom Mme. Zora had not thought of for years, should appear in her automatic script when she was yet

alive. The news of her husband's death naturally filled Mme. Zora's mind with sad thoughts; she thought of their early married life; of their betrothal when they had lived in the small town in which also resided this old lady. Hence the natural subconscious association of ideas.—TR.]

5. THE CASE OF MME. LEBLANC

A lady, Mme. Leblanc, in whom Mme. Zora was very interested, and whom she had tried to convert to spiritism, without succeeding, became seriously ill. Her end was hourly expected. One morning, when Mme. Zora could think of nothing else than her sad condition, and sat neglecting all her domestic occupations, she seemed to sense her presence, as if she were there already "in the spirit," and she was suddenly seized with a desire to write. It was a sort of indescribable inward feeling or sensation in the right side of the body. She took a pencil which immediately began to write the following lines, signed by the deceased:

"What you thought was true. You were right. You spoke truly. I did not dare to believe it, and behold, I am here! Glory be to our Father, whom you love and whom you glorify in your soul. . . . Yes, I I am here, happy to be so, to tell you that in spite of my great desire to believe it, I had to experience it myself—to touch with the finger, to put my hand in the side. I have not forgotten our first meeting, and

I have come to say 'Amen' with you to all the desires of your heart, to all your experiments. . . . A. L."

If Mme. Leblanc had been dead at that moment it could never be categorically established that this message had not come from her; but as it was ascertained that she lived forty-eight hours longer in full consciousness there are only two alternatives for the spiritists—either that she momentarily freed herself from her body two days before the final end, and profited by this anticipated escapade into the beyond to come and speak to her friend, or that there was here a deceiving spirit who wished to amuse himself by pretending to be the discarnate. Both of these hypotheses have found defenders among the friends of Mme. Zora; but, while admitting their legitimacy in general, she did not commit herself to either. She preferred to remain without any explanation rather than accept my odious psychological theory, according to which she herself would be the unconscious author of this little romance, and in which her imagination represented, in conformity with her beliefs, the joyous surprise of her friend arriving in the other world after so many doubts.

6. OTHER CASES

Examples such as these, in which the genesis of the communication has been so clearly established, are rare. The greater number of such messages cannot be proved in this manner, either because the supposed author is really dead, which prevents this veri-

fication, or because the mediums cannot remember the incidents which would explain in a natural manner the contents of the communications. Upon these equivocal cases the judgments of the psychologist and of the convinced spiritist are, as may well be imagined, diametrically opposed. Our documents furnish us innumerable examples of such cases.

1. *Deceiving Messages of Obscure Origin.*—Spiritists naturally attribute to bad or frivolous spirits the lying communications of which they are the victims, not being able to admit that they may be the product of their own natures, since they have not the feeling of being their author. The psychologist, on the contrary, has but little hesitation on this point, knowing how the penumbra of our consciousness is always bristling with small interests or emotional ideas, hardly noticed—fears, desires, regrets, wishes, suspicions, remorse, scruples, memories, and psychic elements of all kinds, which the every-day affairs of life suppress, but which are ready to surge upward and become organized in obsessions, more or less personalized, however little the individual believes it to be so or knows of it. The lying communications, apparently inexplicable, of which so many novices complain (and which finish often in disgusting them with mediumship) have probably no other source.

2. *Imaginary Reconstruction of the Dead.*—The mediumistic creations with which we are here concerned are again not deceiving in the eyes of the spiritists, when they recognize in them the clearly

authentic presence of their discarnate relatives and friends; but they remain fatally so in the eyes of the psychologist, for whom the pretended "spirits" are only (until proved to the contrary) imitations, sometimes very successful, of people whom the medium had known while living.

This reconstruction of the dead is only an extension of our habit of forming concrete notions of the personality of others, a tendency springing from the necessity of social adaptation, and which can be applied just as well to the absent as to the present. If we had not this innate faculty, which is developed by experience, of representing to ourselves the psychic character of our fellow-creatures and of foreseeing their reactions, we would never be able to hold any social intercourse with them. The eclipses or imperfections of this faculty constitute what is called "want of tact," the art of doing "foolish things," etc. We might say that we possess within ourselves a complete gallery of portraits, more or less exact, of all those whom we have known directly (parents, friends, etc.), or by hearsay (historical and literary persons, etc.), or in imagination (creations of our imagination, ideals, heroes of personal romances, etc.). But these portraits are not set and inert. These personalities live in us; we cause them to act and develop in accordance with their own particular characters, in the situations, real or fictitious, in which we have placed them in our imagination. If such-and-such a person is "there"—my friend John, who is traveling, or my

father, who is dead, or Mr. Pickwick, etc.—I represent to myself what he experiences, what he would think, would say, would do, etc., under certain conditions and circumstances. It is clear that this passion for reconstructing the absent is carried beyond the door of the other world, and the cases of Mme. Zora and Mme. Dupond have shown us with what ease the thoughts of the spiritists can invent and pursue even into the beyond the history of those whom they believe to have "passed over."[1]

These mediumistic representations or imitations exercise upon candid and open natures, which are at the same time the cause and the victims, a seduction much greater than in other individuals. . . . More convincing still to them are the cases in which the deceased retain their judgment, and express ideas, sentiments, wishes, etc., directly *contrary* to those of the medium. How can we suppose that this is not a real spirit?

[Here follow two cases in which this opposition is manifested by the intelligence doing the automatic

[1] This explanation would only hold good, of course, in those cases in which the medium had known the deceased, or heard of him, or possessed some knowledge of him and his life. In the Piper case, many hundreds of personalities have communicated of whose existence the medium knew nothing, and related many facts about their own lives, the life of the sitter, etc., which could not have been obtained by any normal process, by any normal channel of information. Professor Flournoy elsewhere admits this, however (p. 183), and it is only necessary to point this out here, because of the possible misunderstanding which might otherwise have arisen.—TR.

writing to the ideas of the medium. In the first case a father orders his sister-in-law, who has charge of his little girl, to follow a line of action contrary to her express desires. This case Professor Flournoy accounts for by the supposition that the medium's subconsciousness expresses the views which she supposed the father would take were he still alive. In the second case, directions were given by the father of Lucien, the brother of the before-mentioned girl, which were contrary to those of the medium, but which he insisted upon and were so like himself in their characteristic features that his advice was taken. The explanation offered by Professor Flournoy in this case is similar to that of the last—the motives of the deceased were postulated by the subconscious imagination of the subject and externalized in the form of automatic writing, etc.]

CONCLUSION

The observations contained in this chapter have thrown a considerable light upon the capital rôle which the two following factors play in the genesis of deceiving messages: *First*, the existence of latent emotional complexes in the marginal regions of consciousness, and, *second*, their capacity for representing foreign personalities. Although very different in nature, these two factors compliment each other in a marvelous manner, and constitute the principal elements in the reconstruction of the deceased. This is quite obvious in the case of Mme. Dupond. It is clear

that for the general activities of our nature to give birth to such special phenomena as are called spiritistic communications it is necessary to have a particular condition—*viz.*, a certain state of passivity, of mental inertia, of abdication of self, in the expectation of strange interventions—which constitutes the state of mediumship. It is a state of obscure regression or of partial auto-hypnosis (capable of being developed into a total trance), whose dominant trait is the loss of all feeling of initiative or of psychic causality, so that the play of the imagination, which is unfolded in the *sanctum sanctorum* of our personality, and of which one has the consciousness of being more or less the author, appears to the medium to have a reality and an origin independent of himself.

IV

"BENEFICENT SPIRITS"

AFTER deceiving spirits, beneficent spirits! If I separate them from the former it is not because the name is any more accurate in the latter case, but they do not lie as to their real function; they help, they encourage, they free from difficulties, they protect, often even, they save life. For the rest, when by chance they miscarry or commit an error, they are relegated to the class of deceiving spirits, so that the honor of their group is always safe. In tradition and the popular language of the spiritists they carry all sorts of names—spirit protectors, angel guardians, good geniuses, familiar demons, spiritual guides, etc. In our scientific jargon, barbarous and pedantic, we call them *teleological automatisms;* or, more exactly, they represent events psychologically superior to teleological automatisms, since they form, often, a secondary personality, more or less complete, which includes everything from happy inspirations to simple reflexes.

There is, indeed, when one considers it, a scale of "unconscious finality" which constitutes the mystery,

par excellence, of life, and the greatest problem of philosophical biology. Between the contraction of the pupil, under the stimulus of light, or the projection of the arm following the stumbling by the foot, and the apparitions to Joan of Arc of the saints which dictated to her the extraordinary messages of instruction, or her wonderful responses to the theologians who had decided to ruin her, we find all the intermediate stages. The rubrics which follow only respond to some categories of cases and are far from exhausting the subject. Although proceeding, for the most part, from non-mediumistic persons, the following observations illustrate psychological processes which are common in mediums, and which would infallibly have given place to a spiritistic interpretation with subjects or in circles given to spiritism.

I. ANTI-SUICIDAL HALLUCINATIONS

On the day following a lecture on "Subconscious Phenomena" I received from one of my hearers a letter inclosing, among other incidents, the following case:

"Some years ago, in passing through a period of great trial, I no longer wished to live. . . . I had prepared to end my life, and it was only a matter of time when, stretched on a couch, I heard perfectly the cries of my son, with whom his grandmother was playing upon the veranda of our chalet, situated about nine miles from the place where I then was. When

I was informed of the hour, the coincidence was exact. From that moment I have interested myself most keenly in this life. . . . The intimate nature of the facts which I relate to you prevents my signing it."

It is regrettable that my correspondent by reason of timidity or exaggerated modesty, which is one of the great obstacles in psychic research, has prevented her signing this document, because it deprives the case of all evidential value. But, supposing it to be true, this case is a pretty example of anti-suicidal automatism. According to Myers's theory, the subliminal self endowed with telepathic faculties, or at least extraordinary auditory hyperæsthesia, would have transmitted to the consciousness of this desperate mother the distant laughter of her son in order to awaken in her thoughts which would again attach her to this life. In the current psychopathological conceptions, which ignore the subliminal and telepathy, the laughter of the child is only a memory—the coincidence being, on this theory, purely fortuitous —a memory which became externalized as a hallucination by reason of its association with the thoughts and memories of her son,—the hallucination resulting from the state of mental dissociation of the poor woman. The fact that this hallucination arose just at the right time to divert her from her deadly purpose might be regarded either as a happy chance or as a fact of subconscious finality—the obscure manifestation of the will to live stifled and perverted.

To sum up, the unexpected psychic phenomenon which saved the life of this anonymous lady only did so indirectly by changing the course of her thoughts, and remains a case of simple auditory pseudo-perception.

There are cases far more striking where the anti-suicidal automatism directly intervenes at the moment of the execution of the act to prevent it, and is sometimes clothed in all the imaginary complexity of a strange apparition. Here are two examples, one historical, the other as yet unpublished:

The Case of Benvenuto Cellini

We are familiar with the episode of the captivity of Benvenuto Cellini, where, tired of his bad deeds, and having resolved to take his own life, the famous artist was marvelously preserved from doing so—first, by an invisible force which hindered him from accomplishing the fatal act, then by the apparition of an angel, whose exhortations awakened his courage and caused him to abandon his sinister project.

The Pope held him imprisoned in the Castle of San Angelo. He lay there with a fractured leg, not yet healed, upon a rotting straw mattress, in a damp dungeon, almost entirely deprived of light. Having come to an end of his endurance, and being without any knife to kill himself, he succeeded in arranging a piece of wood, over which he had accidentally stumbled, so that it would strike his head from its

unstable position when he desired it. But when all was ready, and he was about to lift his hand, he was seized by an invisible force, which threw him two yards away! He remained there in a swoon for some hours. The keeper, having found him in this condition, believed him dead and was about to fetch a priest. But at the sound of voices he came to himself; help was furnished him, and he was given another mattress. In reflecting upon what had been able to stop him in his design, he saw an intervention of divine protection in his favor.

The following night he saw in a dream the apparition of a wonderful young man, who reproved him in these terms: "Knowest thou who it is who has intrusted to thee this body, which thou hast wished to destroy before its allotted time?" He replied that he recognized that he was indebted to the God of nature. "Is it thus, then," replied the beautiful youth, "that thou despisest His work in wishing to destroy it? Let thyself be led by Him, and do not cease to trust in His power." "The apparition added," said Benvenuto, "many other words, also admirable, of which I do not recall the thousandth part. I believe that this figure of an angel had told me the truth." The captive then wrote on the leaves of his Bible a renouncement of his intention to commit suicide, and on doing so he recovered all his energy. He had also in his prison other visions in which appeared, vaguely, the same angelic face, austere and chaste.

In the language and in the light of present-day psychology, this adventure may be interpreted in the following manner:

Already predisposed to subconscious phenomena by reason of the genial temperament of the artist, debilitated by the life of passion and tumult which he had led, still shaken by the sudden turn of fortune and a recent escape, in which he had broken his leg, finally and especially weakened by the length of his imprisonment, Cellini finished by undergoing in his dungeon a temporary psychological dissociation. While his conscious mind, depressed by the circumstances and reduced to a narrower and narrower circle of gloomy thoughts, contemplated suicide, the innate instinct of physical and moral preservation was operative behind it all and, recombining the latent energies of this powerful individuality, allowed them to surge forth at the appropriate moment under a double form. On the one hand we find the motor automatism which seized him at the critical moment and displayed itself in a violent muscular explosion, which made him, regardless of his fracture, jump out of the reach of danger. On the other hand it is subliminal imagination which, under the impressive and persuasive aspect of a heavenly messenger, placed before him all the religious and moral arguments which were capable of convincing him and changing his feelings. By reason of this a synthesis was re-established between his degraded personality and the more exalted reasons for living, which had been momentarily dis-

sociated, and Cellini became again his entire self and was cured of all desire for suicide.

We cannot say exactly why it was in the mouth of a beautiful youth (rather than that of Christ or the Virgin, for example) that the dream phantasy placed the exhortations which influenced the poor, desperate man. It is clear that this symbolic image was at that moment the most accessible and the most appropriate for its function of a herald of truth. Perhaps we may see there an echo of certain secret preferences of the artist, or a recollection of divine messengers or envoys, so frequent in the first chapters of the Bible, the reading of which Cellini had begun the preceding days. But whatever it may be, nothing authorizes us to believe that this young man was a permanent reality—a familiar spirit, angel guardian, spiritual guide, etc. In psychological terms, it was a secondary personality more or less stable and well systematized, for it does not seem that this apparition ever manifested to him on other occasions. At no other time in his life did he believe that he had a familiar spirit, or act as if he believed it. Assuredly we encounter, scattered throughout his *Memoirs*, certain indications of automatism, or of exaggerated suggestibility (when—*e.g.*, a necromancer made him see, one night, a number of devils); but these phenomena of the subconsciousness remain without coherence, and we could never class Cellini among the cases of double personality.

The phenomena of automatism and hallucination

which he presented in prison were, then, the result of a dissociation purely accidental and transitory, due to the peculiar circumstances in which he found himself. If he had retained full possession of his faculties it is probable that the brave and fiery Florentine would never have had the idea of suicide; but to suppose that this idea had come to him and temporarily carried him away is quite natural. It would result from a war of motives in the interior of his personality, which came to him clothed in this particular form.

The Case of Baroness d'A——

The adventure of Cellini is not the only one of its kind which could be found in the annals of psychopathology. But it seemed to me sufficiently typical to serve as an introduction to a recent case, which differs from it only in its extrinsic circumstances. I owe the knowledge of this case to one of my colleagues, Doctor T——, who was the involuntary hero of it, and who unwittingly played in the existence of the unfortunate woman the rôle of the "beautiful young man" of Cellini. It concerned a lady of his acquaintance, who saw him rise before her (in hallucination) at the moment when she was about to throw herself into the water under the influence of her gloomy thoughts. Not only was she hindered by force at that moment, but, like Cellini, hearing the discourse of the angel, she definitely abandoned her intention of suicide by virtue of the admonitions of the imaginary doctor.

The following account is based upon notes which Doctor T—— furnished me,[1] upon the oral information obtained from Baroness d'A——:

[Briefly, the case is this: Baroness d'A——, the heroine of this story, is a lady of literary and artistic tastes, having had some articles and verse published. Her husband, associated with public affairs, lived much in foreign countries. She lived always a very honorable but excitable life. She possessed a keen imagination; was very intelligent; suffered somewhat in her health, and was melancholy at times. She was the mother of two children, aged ten and twelve years. One summer, at a summer resort in the mountains, she met Doctor T——, and they became greatly drawn to each other. When she left their friendship continued by letter, and they discussed philosophical and moral questions at great length. A little later Baroness d'A—— took a gynecological treatment, and at about that time read a book on sexual questions, from which she gained the erroneous idea that she had been infected with syphilis; thenceforward she dared not kiss her children, and she would not look any one in the face. She lost weight; she became ill and irritable; finally she determined to commit suicide. All this remained a close secret, however, as she dared tell no one. One evening she attended a ball. On the eve of her leav-

[1] He is Dr. Emile Thomas, privat-docent of the faculty of medicine of Geneva, who has allowed me to publish this case and sign his name.

ing the house she received a letter from Doctor T——, which she placed in her corsage without reading. She attended the ball, dancing with more than accustomed vim. When she again reached home she went to the bridge over the river (having found the street empty) and looked into the water. Clear night; silvery moon; profound silence. She peered into the water, selecting the place in which to throw herself. At that moment Doctor T—— emerged (so it seemed) from the water, and somehow reached the wharf on which she was then standing. He threw his arm around her waist and dragged her from the spot. He then hurried her home (his arm still about her), and continued to upbraid her severely for her attempt. They reached her home. He took the key from her hand and opened the door. They went up-stairs into her boudoir; she lighted the lamp; he still remained with her, his arm tightly clasped around her waist. He then released her. He reproached her severely, forcing her to her knees before him. He reproached her for attempting to take her life; she had no right to, he said, on account of her children. It was cowardly, therefore a crime. She replied, and a lengthy argument took place between the two. Finally she hid her head in the cushions of the sofa, but Doctor T—— shook her roughly and made her listen to him. Finally he left her. She lay shivering until the morning. All desire for suicide had left her. The next morning, however, she found a blue mark about her waist, where the doctor had placed his arm;

this remained for several days. For two days she remained in a state of semi-swoon, thinking over the events of that night. During this period she remained in bed, and did not appear normal to outsiders. Her feelings toward the doctor had always been mixed—respect and fear being blended. Thus, he had unconsciously taken the place of a sort of spiritual adviser. After that night Baroness d'A—— became virtually normal.]

Now let us consider this case, and its possible interpretation. It is certain that Baroness d'A—— was not in a state of ordinary somnambulism, since she remembered perfectly all the scenes and events through which she had passed—the water, the street; all tactile sensations, also kinesthetic—the feeling of the doctor's arm, etc. Might it not be, on the contrary, that (inasmuch as this scene took place without any witness) the Baroness simply *dreamed* the whole occurrence—having come home from the ball very late, thrown herself down on the couch, where she awoke the next morning?[1] Despite the memory

[1] This supposition has in its favor the fact that Baroness d'A—— still carried the letter in her bosom, for it is inconceivable that she would really commit suicide without having read it. She did not read it at the ball, nor on her staircase, nor in the street, nor in the light of the moon; it is therefore likely that, freed from her cousin (who escorted her home), she went to her own apartment to read it, from which she did not emerge, but in which she experienced in imagination the whole scene. As for the wharf, the pretty light on the water, etc., Baroness d'A—— would have mentally seen these in advance in making her plans. They formed the skeleton of her idea.

and the conviction which she had of having gone from the house, of having seen the lake silvered by the moon, of leaning over the water, etc., this ought not to prevent us from applying, in her case, the general term somnambulism. Simple dream or somnambulistic enactment, it is of little importance to us. The essential fact remains, that this imaginary intervention of Doctor T—— had as its consequence the complete change of the state of mind of Baroness d'A——, of radically curing her idea of suicide. We might compare her case with partial conversions or psychic revolutions, limited to a particular weakness or inclination, accompanied by hallucinatory phenomena. As for the blue mark about her waist found the next day, if it was really related to this scene of the night it would represent an effect of auto-suggestion—analogous to the stigmata of the mystics, and to other vaso-motor phenomena sometimes seen as the result of certain dreams.[1]

As regards the signification or the intellectual content of the hallucination, in opposition to the mental images and to the dramatic development of the scene, this signification is evidently that of a struggle between the motives which urged Baroness d'A—— to suicide and those which militated against it. In her violent somnambulistic discussion with the doctor it

[1] See, in this connection, the article by Dr. George A. Waterman in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (October-November, 1910, pp. 196–210), where several very interesting cases are given.—Tr.

was she who represented the first, and he who opposed to it victoriously the second. But it is manifest that these latter form a part of the total personality of the unfortunate mother: the love of her children, the duty of avoiding for her family the opprobrium of a suicide, the sentiment of cowardice of such an act, the religious scruples subsisting at the basis of her soul, etc.; there was nothing in the argument of the doctor, such as Baroness d'A—— recalled it, which surpassed the reasons which her own normal sense would certainly have furnished had she been able, in the course of the preceding day, to recover for one moment the full possession of herself.

It is clear that many other considerations co-operated in the revulsion of her mind. The fact that, after all, her illness was not so incurable nor so contagious as she believed; all the enjoyments which existence could still give her; the physical fear of death . . . the idea of breaking off the correspondence with Doctor T—— might also have come to her mind—a theory which the adherents of the Freud school would surely point out immediately if the analysis of this case should pass into their hands! However much this may have been the case, it is not shown in the tirade of the doctor, which was conducted only along the highest moral and religious lines.

The Choice of Symbolic Personification.—It may be asked, in this connection, how do we know that a real telepathic influence was not exercised on this occasion by Doctor T——, since we know that telep-

athy at a distance is a fact? Without denying its possibility, I would say that there seems to me no reason to invoke it in this particular case. Doctor T—— was quite ignorant of Baroness d'A——'s supposed illness, and of her contemplated suicide; and did not recall having even thought of her on the evening in question. On the other hand, we have the positive knowledge that he would be the one most likely to assume this rôle in her subconscious imagination—to play the part of mentor, since he had always appeared to her the essence of reason, wisdom, faith in an ideal, etc., and if she felt sometimes irritated and at the same time charmed by the religious views of the doctor—so opposed to hers—she could not refrain from inwardly rendering homage to them, knowing that he had much truth on his side. In short, his spiritual and moral superiority had gained a great hold over her—an influence, an authority, an ascendancy which she had never felt in another. . . .

We remember the cases of hysterics who, haunted subconsciously by the recollection of their doctor, have suddenly a visual hallucination of him, or hear his voice, especially if they find themselves in some critical circumstance in which they justly have need of his presence in order to strengthen them and free them from bad influences.[1]

[1] Let us recall, among others, the case of the hysteric whom Janet had cured, by suggestion, of her fear of cholera, and who, seized again by her fear because she had to pass the door of a hospital, was about to go round by another street when she suddenly saw, as a hallucination, Janet barring the street and

By this ingenious process their subconsciousness, which we should be tempted to call superconsciousness, comes to the help of their personality, ordinarily too feeble to accomplish the action of itself. And there is no need in such people, as Janet has well remarked, for the doctor to have specially suggested the thought to them of behaving in such and such a manner under the circumstances in question: the general influence is sufficient—the heritage of former suggestions which exist in the subject and which his imagination adapts, by analogy, to new circumstances often very different.

In the present case Doctor T—— had never given Baroness d'A—— suggestions or commands of any kind whatever; but we may believe that, by reason of his personal influence (which she felt, as we have seen from her letters), all his relations with her were one vast suggestion, in the sense of moral support and hope, in the midst of the difficulties of life. . . . From all this it is obvious that Doctor T—— would naturally be the one who would be chosen by the subconscious imagination of Baroness d'A—— as the one who would hinder her from such an act. As for the details of the rôle, they were, as almost always occurs in a dream, a mélange of memories and fantastic traits adapted to the temperament of the subject. . . . As to the

obliging her to pass the door of the dreaded hospital. (Janet, *Névroses et Idées Fixes*, Paris, 1898, T. I., p. 449, etc. Compare C. B. Leroy, "Interprétations psychologiques des visions intellectuelles chez les mystiques," p. 43, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, January–February, 1907.)

method of grasping her by the waist, dragging her by force to her feet, or reprimanding her, etc., all this violence of action and of language is pure fiction, but a transparent fiction, which expresses in a striking manner the place which the personality of the doctor occupied in the psychic economy of the Baroness. . . .

RÉSUMÉ

So far as we can draw any general conclusions from particular cases, we may say that the production of an anti-suicidal hallucination, well developed, with a subject otherwise normal, supposes a quadruple condition: 1. A constitution somewhat neuropathic, very imaginative, and susceptible to transient dissociations, following physical influences or mental debility. 2. A temperament sufficiently optimistic, or furnished with sufficient reasons for living, not to allow itself to be brought to the very depths of despair by discouragement. 3. An *ensemble* of psychic circumstances depressing enough to cause the motor expression of morbid thoughts and the desire to end life. 4. Moral isolation—the absence of all exterior confidants capable of reawakening the latent energies, and to whom the subject could tell his silent thoughts, they being healthfully discharged in this manner. The combination of so many conditions ought to be very rare. Also, we could scarcely hope that the phenomena of teleological automatism could ever counterbalance, to an appreciable degree, the grow-

ing tendency toward suicide engendered by the miseries of our actual civilization.

Varieties of Anti-suicidal Automatism

The cases of Cellini, and especially that of Baroness d'A——, are very complex examples of anti-suicidal automatism. It is not necessary that the phenomena should necessitate a richness of imagination, or should be pushed as far as division of personality, with a dramatic struggle between the desperate self on the one hand, and the motives for living, made concrete by a clear personification, on the other. It may happen that, as in the example of the anonymous lady, everything resolves itself to some simple fact of sensorial or motor automatism, which arrests the unfortunate person at the point of taking away his life, and which, by reason of his astonishment, brings him to reflection and a change of mind. We find it so in two good recent cases—patients of Doctor Jung. One was a paralytic general, who, wishing to throw himself out of a window, found himself thrown back into the room by the sudden appearance of a shining light before the window. The other was a psychopath, who tried to end his life by means of gas. After having inhaled a few deep inspirations he felt a heavy hand grasp him on the chest and throw him to the ground, where he by degrees recovered from his fright. In these two cases the automatism limited itself to an elementary hallucination, visual or tactile, which saved the individual and made him delay at a

critical moment, thus leaving him time to return to a saner condition of mind.

Perhaps it might be convenient to descend further still and admit the presence of a like process, but in a rudimentary degree, in all those cases where one would not ordinarily suspect it—in many of those attempts at suicide rendered abortive by reason of some fortuitous circumstance, as trembling of the hand, etc. Indeed, the very least instinctive or reflex phenomenon which protects the individual, in spite of himself, is already, at basis, a teleological automatism, the index of a finality which might be considered as an infinitesimal doubling of consciousness, nascent or evanescent. Also, it is likely that we deceive ourselves often in attributing to pure chance unforeseen events which are really due to some wise vigilance hidden in the depths of the psycho-physiological organism. . . . In cases of suicide prepared for in advance, and which are prevented, nevertheless, because the cord was too long, the poison insufficient, the arm badly steadied, the water of insufficient depth, etc., should we not have a right to suspect some trick of the subconscious processes, some obscure *arrière-pensées*, in the marginal regions of consciousness which baffled the projects of the ordinary consciousness, making it unwittingly bungle its attempt? This would be the beginning of anti-suicidal automatism, which has nothing of the impossible about it. Indeed, the researches of Freud and his school have shown us that such a supposition is quite within the bounds of reason.

If to these different degrees of psychological development we add the individual differences of mental imagery and the play to which the creative imagination can abandon itself in the elaboration of symbolic personifications, we can see a great variety which anti-suicidal automatisms would present when more examples are gathered.

2. VARIOUS PHENOMENA OF CRYPTOPSYCHISM [1]

The intervention of teleological automatisms—alias "beneficent spirits"—is not limited to the extreme

[1] I have cited *cryptæsthesia* and *cryptomnesia* because it is there that the perceptions and memories (which ordinarily serve as points of departure) furnish the materials for the elaboration of teleological automatisms. But it is clear that all our psychic functions—association, reasoning, imagination, etc.—can contribute to this secret elaboration and merit equally the prefix of "crypto." As it is not always easy to assign to each of these components in the process its exact place, the most convenient method is to apply to all of them the general term *cryptopsychism* (*cryptopsychie*), proposed by Boirac (*Psychologie Inconnue*, Paris, 1908, p. 116, etc.). The elementary and classical example of cryptopsychism, discovered a quarter of a century ago by Binet, Janet, etc., is that of the hysteric in whom the tactile excitation of an anæsthetic finger, although not felt by the subject, was, nevertheless, seen by her as a visual image of this finger. One might say, in a general way, that cryptopsychism is the process by which an afferent sensation which remains unperceived and ignored by the subject provokes an efferent phenomenon which seems to arise spontaneously by itself without apparent cause. It must be understood that a production of this kind, of which the subject has not the consciousness of being the author, might easily be attributed to spirits, however little it appears to warrant that explanation. As to the subconscious functioning (polygonal of Grasset) of various faculties—sensibilities, memory,

cases which prevent an unfortunate man from taking his life. It manifests itself, also, to protect the individual against dangers of which he has no knowledge—imminent, distant, or only probable; more often still, to inform him and guide him to his advantage in the little occurrences of life. As for psychic facts, scarcely noticed, we could hardly tell whether or not they were willed by ourselves, so completely is their origin lost in the marginal regions of our personality, and which, when we reflect upon it, astonish us by their admirable adaptation to circumstances. Forgotten memories, returning at a favorable moment, repartees which are *à propos*, and which surprise us ourselves, suppressed after-thoughts, inexplicable hesitations preventing us from action, or, on the contrary, obscure impulses which we are glad we have followed, good ideas, illuminating thoughts, inspirations of genius which flash into our heads and bring us unexpected help; in fact, all that we call "tact," "presence of mind," "inspiration," or "intuition"; all that is at the basis of teleological automatisms and fill our whole lives—the study of all this is well worth the most painstaking research and analysis.

Here, for example, after having sought a book in my library, I am about to leave my room to see if I cannot find it in another room, when something holds

imagination, will, etc.—and upon the attempts at cerebral localization of this psychic automatic activity, see Grasset: *The Marvels Beyond Science*, New York, 1910.

me back. Instinctively I return toward a little table, and my gaze falls immediately upon the book in question, lost amidst others of the same color. The latent memory of this misplacing of the book came, then, subconsciously to direct my steps and my gaze to this place. From what time dated this memory I cannot tell; perhaps for some moments, since I had looked at this table in my useless search, and I overlooked the book, confusing it with its neighbors; perhaps some weeks, for I alone had placed the book there (though I do not recall it). These two hypotheses which exist fundamentally side by side—*cryptæsthesia* (latent perception) and *cryptomnesia* (latent memory), deal with actual ideas which, not noticed directly and of themselves, act, however, and are translated into consciousness by means of the phenomena with which they are associated—inhibitions, or motor impulses, images and ideas, emotions, hallucinations;—it all depends upon temperament.

If I were, however, a little imaginative, hysterical, a poet, unbalanced, a genius, or a medium, the insignificant adventure which I have related would, without doubt, assume the proportions of a psychic phenomenon more or less important. I should—*e.g.*, have heard a voice say to me, "Seek on the little table," etc. Or I should have seen arise before me a distinct image, quite recognizable, of the table containing the lost volume; or I might have seen this in a dream; or, better still, by means of the crystal ball the image would have appeared to me as an exterior vision in

the glass ball. . . . Or again, my "guardian angel," clothed in white, would appear before me and forbid my leaving the room, and would have brought me by the hand to the aforementioned table; or, perhaps by typtology or automatic writing it would have dictated to me where the looked-for object rested. But this interpretation appears to me, until proved to the contrary, arbitrary and superfluous. The facts with which it deals are explained much more simply by some cryptopsychic process with which imagination has mixed its customary appearance of spiritism. Some unpublished examples will enable the reader to judge for himself. I divide them into three or four headings, which have many points in common.

1. *Premoniticns Induced by Subconscious Perception* (*Cryptæsthesia*).—So many facts of this kind have been published[1] that I experience some scruples in adding to the number. I shall limit myself to two examples, in which death was avoided by an automatic impuise to flee, with the accompaniment of auditory or visual hallucinations. The first case is that of a merchant whose spirit of enterprise caused him to travel across South America. From the facts which I have gathered from his own mouth, he heard, at different times in his momentous life, a mysterious voice, always the same, very short and incisive, giving him counsel or warning. Of a temperament

[1] See the large collection of cases published by Myers, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xi, pp. 411–585.

essentially practical and positive, a stranger to all philosophical or religious interests, Mr. X—— had no theory as regards this "voice," and he contented himself with simply recording the facts. In two cases the voice saved his life, as well as the lives of the Indians who accompanied him and who served as guides in his adventures.

On one occasion, as his party had just halted under a tree to prepare a meal, Mr. X—— heard a voice command him, "Save yourself!" and he forced his men to strike camp at once. Scarcely had they done so when the tree fell with a crash on the very place which they had just occupied. They would all have been killed had not this premonition occurred. An examination of the trunk showed that it was entirely rotten, and, so to say, hollowed out by white ants. Another time, descending a river in a canoe, they were just about to run close to a promontory when the same voice imperiously ordered them immediately to cross the river and gain the other shore as quickly as possible. This appeared so absurd that Mr. X—— was obliged to threaten the Indians with death to force them to take this course. They had scarcely crossed more than half the river when the promontory fell, causing a whirlpool in the water, which would have capsized the boat and undoubtedly swallowed them up if they had continued in the first direction.

On these two occasions the voice, says Mr. X——, had a character so imperative that no hesitation was possible, and he was forced to obey it, and to make

his men obey it. The verbal automatism, in other words, was accompanied by a cenesthesic and emotional automatism (sentiment of imminent danger and impulse to flee), of which the origin consisted in visual perceptions (traces of termites, the aspect of the river-banks, etc.), or auditory perceptions (preliminary crackings) remaining unperceived by the ordinary personality.

The second case is a little more obscure, and it is complicated by an apparition or symbolical personification.

An Austrian lady, Mme. Brey, very intelligent and of great will-power, but of a very nervous temperament, had a great number of psychic phenomena, which she herself explains in the most natural manner, with the exception of one which particularly struck her and appeared to her entirely mysterious. Before going to pass the winter at Madeira for her health, and when already on the boat, she saw the apparition of one of her absent doctors, whose look made her understand that she was threatened with a great danger, and that she ought to disembark with the greatest possible speed, which she did immediately, in a sort of dream-like state. Well for her, for she learned later that the plague was ravaging Madeira, and that the said boat was shipwrecked!

At first sight this history of a shipwreck avoided appeared to me to furnish a splendid case in favor of some supernormal faculty of precognition. I believed

myself even to have found in it a striking illustration of the theory which the great literary prophet of the occult, Maeterlinck, elaborated in his chapter upon "Chance." According to him, chance consists simply in that the future, hidden from our mortal eye, is eternally present to our unconsciousness (Myers said to our subliminal consciousness), which succeeds sometimes in keeping the danger from us. . . .

The case of Mme. Brey is a very good illustration of the manner in which the supernormal generally vanishes when we come to inquire into it a little more closely. For, in this case, it appears that the ship was not in reality wrecked at all. And as for the plague, Mme. Brey could have learned all about it normally before her departure. So that the most natural supposition is that Mme. Brey heard this fact, but simply forgot it until externalized in the form of the warning figure—which warned her not to sail.

I therefore fail to see in this case any evidence of precognition, or even of telepathy from the absent doctor.

2. *Phantasmagoria Induced by Internal Sensations.*—In the same manner as in external perceptions, so can internal sensations (visceral, cenesthesic, organic, etc.[1]) serve as points of departure or inducers of

[1] See, however, the extended review by Mr. Piddington (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xix, pp. 267–341) of Dr. Henry Head's *Goulstonian Lectures for* 1901, in which veridical and visceral types of hallucination are compared, and many points of dissimilarity shown to exist—apart from the coincidence itself.—Tr.

automatisms apparently supernormal, as in dreams, said to be prophetic, of sickness or of cure, which are only a dramatized expression by the imagination of the sleeper of vital processes already begun in the depths of the tissues and of which we are unaware in the distractions of the day's work. These hallucinatory phenomena are more rare and much more striking outside hypnogogic hallucinations, etc. Here is an unpublished case, which I owe to Mme. de B——:

My mother, a posthumous infant, had never known her father (his photograph no longer existed). She loved and regarded as her true father, however, the second husband of my grandmother. It is, then, not very probable that her thoughts should be fixed upon the memory of her real father at a moment when she felt herself very ill and in danger of death—at my birth. A phenomenon necessary to the *accouchement* was slow in making its appearance; she suffered much, but, from what she said, preserved her consciousness. At this critical moment she perceived, upon the threshold of the door of her room, facing her bed, a man leaning against the side of the door; she looked at him without knowing who he was. He was dressed in blue, with gold buttons. He approached her bed. He placed his hand on her head and said to her: "My beloved child, fear nothing; thou shalt not die; 'that' is going to happen." Some seconds after "that" did occur, and my mother was saved. Later she described to my grandmother this

strange apparition, and asked if it was that of her father. My grandmother confirmed this, and said: "Your father, who died by accident, looked like that, and his clothing corresponded to what you saw." My mother died without ever having again seen her father.

In such a case the spiritists have no doubt that it is the deceased father himself who came to comfort his daughter in this grave condition, and it does not astonish them, either, that this apparition should clothe himself for her in his blue coat; or that the father was more familiar than the patient herself with the physiological processes which were about to take place. Psychologists, stumbling at this double singularity, consider it more plausible to see in this hallucinatory scene a dramatic combination of long-forgotten auditory memories, some description formerly heard, then completely forgotten, toward which the thought of his daughter would be turned in the crisis through which she was passing.[1]

[1] Every one knows with what facility descriptions which we read or hear set on fire the visual imagination, and are translated into representations more or less vivid. These concrete representations once born may subsist in the latent memory and reappear, even when one can no longer remember the occasion which first of all provoked them. "A lady of my acquaintance," wrote Doctor Prince, "gave me a very exact description of a person whom she had seen in a dream, whom she had never met in reality. She had completely forgotten that I had described that person to her a few days before. The description which she gave me after her dream was an exact reproduction of mine, and in the same terms!" (Morton Prince, "The Unconscious," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. iii, October, 1908, p. 265.)

3. *Cryptomnesic Revelations.*—The following section treats of cryptomnesia in so far as it vitiates the greater part of the phenomena of spiritism, but it is convenient to speak of it here as a source of teleological automatisms, which convey to the subject valuable information already in his possession, but of which he is ignorant. The classical example is that of dreams which enable lost articles to be found, showing the sleeper the place where he had forgotten he let them fall. If this happens to a person with a bias toward spiritism he will probably attribute this vision to his "guardian angel," so much so, indeed, that the latter will probably intervene, in the vision, and indicate by a gesture or voice, if not by some more complicated mediumistic manifestation, the place where the misplaced object lies (see, *e.g.*, the example of the lost breast-pin in *From India*, etc., pp. 403–406). The psychologist explains the phenomenon in a more natural manner, contending that the loss of the object —of the stone of a ring, *e.g.*, not remarked by the self, momentarily abstracted or absorbed in other distractions—has, nevertheless, been perceived by indirect vision, and registered in the subconscious, where it reissues in sleep, or in some other hypnoidal state.

There is, I admit, something paradoxical in the fact that an incident so important as the loss of a precious stone does not strike the attention of the individual, while subconsciously impressing him enough to be clearly remembered and be recalled. And certainly

the teleological organization of this individual would have been more perfect if instead of returning to him in a dream the completion of the incident had occurred immediately; he would then only have had to bend down and pick up the jewel, and this would have spared him the chagrin of finding that he had lost it, and the trouble of looking for it. But, on the spiritistic theory, the paradox is not less true. Why did not the good angel who saw the jewel fall have the consideration immediately to warn the owner instead of letting him re-enter the house and lament until the night? *Ce n'est pas gentil!* And it seems to me more respectful, not only toward the methodological principle of economy, but also to the reputation of good spirits, not to attribute to these latter the imperfections which are inherent in our own nature—lapses of memory, mental dissociations, etc.

Among the varieties of cryptomnesia I give a case of latent knowledge which the subject knows himself to have possessed, but which he cannot recover; and the unexpected revival is attributed by his imagination to the intervention of a strange personality. Here is an example, non-spiritistic, which was communicated to me some years ago by Mme. Thomas-Coulin, and which is explained by the combination of two very simple facts—first, the direct evocation of a forgotten memory; and second, the tendency to represent the absent—speaking and acting as if they were present:

The following incident happened the other day to my father (Pastor Coulin), almost blind. He enjoyed discussing theology and philosophy with Professor Frommel. He suffered slightly from loss of memory of proper names, and he obstinately sought for that one which had been given to the system of Leibnitz. After a moment's pause he said, "I shall ask Frommel the next time I see him." At the same instant he plainly saw Professor Frommel before him, and heard his voice saying, "It is pre-established harmony!"

Among the spiritists, if it had concerned a dead person such a process of reminiscence with dramatization would inevitably pass for a proof of the intervention of the discarnate.

4. *Subconscious Conjectures.*—We all have the precious faculty of divining, more or less, the unknown in accordance with our acquired experience; and our presumptions are often correct. Now it happens that this power of reasoning—evaluation of probabilities, various inferences, etc.—is effected in the obscure margins of our consciousness which is preoccupied with something else, and that the conclusion alone springs forth full blown in the shape of a presentiment which imposes itself upon us with an air of immediate certitude. Upon reflection one can usually follow the chain and disentangle the sequence of ideas or incidents which have brought about this result. But this is not always easy. Most people, moreover, do not ever think of attempting it, and

their presentiments (those, at least, which are verified, for the others are often forgotten) remain engraven on their memory as mysterious and inexplicable phenomena. It is a fine groundwork for mediumistic embellishments and spiritistic interpretations. Here is an example:

M. Ledoc, merchant, attended out of curiosity a number of séances held by a family of his friends. They were held at five o'clock in the afternoon, so that he could go there direct from his office. At one of these meetings (at which I was present), after various trials with no noticeable result, he placed himself alone at the table, which immediately began to crack, then to make raps. M. Ledoc had a very rapid trembling of his right wrist, his arms being tense, and soon his whole body vibrated in unison with the movements of the table. In spite of these signs of automatism he preserved sufficient presence of mind to speak with us freely, and to spell out the words himself. At first these were only incoherent letters; but after about a quarter of an hour, the following series of letters was slowly spelled out: *tuseraismieuxauedaubureauqueici*—of which M. Ledoc could make no sense. But it was quite clear to me, who had noted the letters. It was, *tu serais mieux au bureau qu'ici*. Without telling him, I begged him to ask some questions of the table; and the following dialogue took place between the table and himself:

"Why this dictation?" (Reply, two blows; that is to say, "No.")

"Who is there?"

(No reply.)

"Is it an independent spirit?"

"No"; then, "yes." [1]

The table then spelled out: "A telegram awaits you. It comes from Austria. It is very important." M. Ledoc then decided to return to his office, and found there a telegram from Vienna, which had arrived at Geneva at 4.55 P.M. It proved to be very important—involving a transaction of about 60,000 francs.

Upon reflection, and after talking with M. Ledoc, however, the thing appears to me less astonishing. First, the telegram was from his ordinary correspondent in Vienna, and concerned an affair which he more or less expected. Then, he was in the habit of re-

[1] Here are the details of this little episode, where we see, as often, the naïve subconsciousness, not at first giving itself to be a separate spirit, hastening, nevertheless, to accept the suggestion which was made to it by one of the company. M. Ledoc asks, "Who is there?" (No reply.) "Is it a spirit?" "No." M. Ledoc keeps silent a moment, then asks: "Are you always there?" "Yes." New silence. I request M. Ledoc to ask if it is a part of himself, or an independent spirit. He appears a little astonished, and asks only the second part of the question: "Are you an independent spirit?" "Yes!" An amusing effect of this episode was the change of tone in the table toward M. Ledoc. Before it called him *thou*, but after it accepted the suggestion that it was an independent spirit it called him *you*—as if it were speaking to a strange person!

ceiving every day at least fifteen or eighteen telegrams, and often, in making his calls in various towns, he had presentiments which brought him back to his office sooner than he expected, to find there unforeseen and important news. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that, having closed his office on this special afternoon a little before the usual time, he should have the afterthought that he might lose some business, and that he might have done better to stay in the office, as the table suggested. Finally, the pretended spirit—which had before hesitated as to its independent reality from M. Ledoc—was not sure as to the contents of the telegram. All this gives rise to the suspicion that this mediumistic manifestation was only a translation of one of his habitual presentiments, which was verified—like so many others—by a happy chance in no way extraordinary.

This example of a useful typtological message—the result of simple suggestions or of subconscious conjectures—shows once more with what facility the products of cryptopsychism, when in a propitious environment, clothe themselves with the appearance of spiritistic manifestations. This appearance becomes naturally more striking and irresistible according to whether the cases are complicated by the interplay of several mediums and the co-operation of various forms of cryptopsychism, and perhaps a certain balance of supernormal knowledge due to telepathy, etc.

I could multiply indefinitely examples of cryptopsychism. But the above will at least suffice to draw

the attention of the reader to such phenomena, and I accordingly pass to another class of teleological automatisms, which do not differ essentially from those we have just examined, since they still concern facts of which the subject is not conscious of being the author, however much they correspond to his desires, and represent advantages to him—if not vital, at least intellectual and social.

3. THE MARVELS OF INCUBATION

When the "beneficent spirits" display to the utmost their obliging natures is when they charge themselves with our affairs while we do something else or are asleep. I shall omit for the present those cases of *material* help—such as sweeping the house or preparing the breakfast, etc., which are accomplished so quickly during the night, in order to spare the poor, tired people—by the gnomes, the hobgoblins, and other brownies of legends. Science, which depoetizes everything, has long since dismissed this gracious little world and replaced it by somnambulistic attacks of the person himself. I shall treat only of the *mental* phenomena, rendered by the hidden powers of our nature, which continue to solve our problems when we no longer think of them; and I shall give first an example which happened years before modern spiritism came into existence.

The Fish of Agassiz

In 1832, the famous naturalist Agassiz was busy with his monumental work on fossil fishes. In many

cases it was not easy to determine the character of the fish from the imprint left upon the slab of stone which he possessed, and one in particular was so imperfect that he could not at all reconstruct the fish from the imprint left upon the slab.

It was at this juncture that he experienced three dreams, on succeeding nights. On the first two occasions the bones of this fish appeared to him in a dream-vision, but so confused that he could make nothing of them. On the third night, however, the bones of the fish again appeared, at first muddled, as before; but later they became clearer and more definite in shape, until the entire fish stood reconstructed before him. He then drew upon paper, in the dark, a copy of this vision; and in the morning he found it as a proof of the reality of his experience. On again consulting the slab he found that it was doubtless correct, though it would apparently have been impossible for him to have reconstructed the fish from the slab alone, since many of the bones, and especially important bones, such as the præopercular, had left no impression at all.

This dream of Agassiz—very rarely found in such perfection in a good observer—calls for one or two remarks.

1. The nocturnal vision of Agassiz is remarkably pure from all the usual embellishments of the dream. With a mentality less positive, or with spiritistic inclinations, the fish might have been presented, with appropriate setting, by some messenger from the other

world, or by a fisherman of prehistoric times. The presence or absence of theatrical complications about the solution of a problem depends without doubt, also, upon the nature of the moment, for extreme cases may be met with even in the same subjects. For example, a professor of Assyriology, M. Hilprecht, had once a nocturnal revelation which told him the true sense of an inscription, while some years later the mystery of another inscription was revealed to him in a dream, with the striking setting of an Assyrian temple and a high priest, who caused him to see all kinds of astonishing and exact things.

The analysis of the details of this curious dream shows, however, that they could be traced back to latent memories or to natural inferences of the savant.[1]

2. It seems that in the dream of Agassiz there might have been some trace of lucidity, since his reconstructed fish presented to him certain details—a denticulated præopercular bone, etc., which he had never before remarked upon the fossil imprint, and which former observers had also not perceived, and which his chisel succeeded in disengaging from the stone only after much effort. His description is, however, not concise enough for us to conclude it to be a phenomenon of clairvoyance into the interior of the stone; and it is more simple to admit that his vision was the result either of conscious inferences drawn from signs and marks escaping the normal attention; or from a true genius, which enabled him to guess,

[1] See Newbold, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xii, pp. 11–20.

from the visible part of the skeleton, what ought to be the remainder of it. However curious such cases as this of Agassiz are, they do not afford evidence of spiritistic intervention, which I had in mind in writing this chapter.

Certainly, they place before us an enigma—*viz.*, the true nature of those hidden processes which suddenly bloom forth in results, vainly sought for until then. But this enigma does not essentially differ from the ordinary and normal incubation, which, in each, during the hours of sleep, prepares for us the renewal of mental work in such a manner as to render its continuation more fruitful and rapid; it is the paradoxical problem of an activity which physiology holds to be purely physico-chemical (*i.e.*, mechanical in the last analysis) but which, however, appears to us to manifest an intelligent direction—a choice, a tendency toward the ends and aims which the conscious personality had set before itself; in short, an evident finality. Now this problem, by reason of its universality in the whole biological realm, ought to be abandoned to the philosophers. It is certainly not for scientific psychology to venture upon the ocean of such speculations—if it does not wish to expose itself, and to fall between Scylla and Charybdis—I should say, to be indefinitely tossed between the obsolete conceptions of "unconscious celebration" (dear to materialism) and the daring hypotheses of the "transcendental subject" of DuPrel, of the "Subliminal Self" of Myers, of "the Unconscious" (omniscient) of Hartmann, etc. Let us

follow rather the example of the physicists, who study the fall of bodies and celestial movements without concerning themselves with the nature of gravitation. Things happen in this material universe, they tell us, *as if* bodies were attracted to each other according to such and such laws, of no consequence elsewhere. Whether they really *are* attracted, or whether they are really the passive playthings of an exterior pressure, is another question. Let us content ourselves by saying, in like manner, that things happen in the mental life *as if* we possessed in ourselves an intelligent "incubator," which continues to hatch out ideas and answer questions which we have confided to its care; a laboratory wisely administered, in which the ingredients placed within it are allowed to simmer and are elaborated into new products, according to our ideas and our designs.

It is immaterial whether we call this precious institution by the name of nerve-center or subliminal imagination or anything else; the important thing for us is to know the influence exerted upon its functioning by the state of the health, the former meditations, the time elapsed, the distractions or occupations, etc. In default of precise information, which is still lacking, we know at least one law of common experience. It is that *every one reaps only what he has sown.* The harvest varies enormously, without doubt, according to the individual soil; but, apart from these differences of fertility, we may say that all brains—brains of geniuses or mediocre brains—render to their owners

the same kind of service, that of maturing what has occupied the conscious thought and provoked voluntary reflection.

Agassiz formed no exception to the rule. Before having the vision of his fish he had worked fifteen days in vain upon its fossil remains, and it appears from his account that this problem pursued him during the period of incubation (the duration of which, unfortunately, he has neglected to indicate to us). This only shows that even the most brilliant intelligences, in the ordinary course of events, obtain nothing without effort—which is another way of expressing the empirical law above mentioned. . . . It is only with the spiritists that we find the true marvels of incubation—or rather of its absence.

Our mediums indeed reap what they have not sown, and it is not in thinking of it all the time that they make their discoveries, but, on the contrary, by not thinking of it at all! . . . Let us ask the authors of mediumistic writings which come to light each year what part they have played in them besides their function as a writing machine through which the spirits operate. They will reply that their inspirations came to them not only without effort, but without any preparation or antecedent cause. *Voilà!* We must agree that this is truly marvelous, and beyond all ordinary conditions of mental production. And the spiritists certainly reason according to the most elementary common sense when they attribute to discarnate intelligences the authorship of these

revelations, to which the organism of the medium is quite foreign, and has simply served as a channel or passive instrument. The libraries of modern spiritism are choked with works of all kinds—philosophy, science, literature, verse and prose, which have been composed in this way; and if I began to quote I should not know when to stop—from the dictations of the Angel Gabriel and of Christ Himself to a group of Geneva spiritists more than half a century ago; to the recent discourses of Abelard (the lover of poor Héloïse), written by two ladies of the best Parisian society; to the "Spirit Teachings" which Rector, Imperator, etc., gave to Stainton Moses; the *Spiritualisation de l'Etre* of Mme. Darel, the posthumous book of Dickens, the revelations of Mrs. Smead relative to Mars and its inhabitants. . . .

But here I am forced to stop my enumeration, since it awakens all my doubts, recalling to me the romances of Mlle. Smith. For certainly the revelations of this latter upon the Martian language or the unknown history of ancient India do not give first place to any of the preceding in brilliance or in originality.[1] If then, as I believe I have sufficiently

[1] It is well known that for some years Mlle. Smith has made, in trance, pictures of religious subjects, which have had an immense success with the public. But this new form of her mediumship does not differ from the old; being due to the influence of suggestion and slow incubation, as has been well shown by Lemaître, "Un Nouveau Cycle Somnambulique de Mlle. Smith: ses Peintures religieuses," *Arch. de Psychol.*, T. vii, Juillet, 1907, p. 63. Upon the esthetic value of these pictures, see Fleury, *id.*, September, 1907, p. 206.

demonstrated elsewhere, these lucubrations (truly astounding at first sight) may be traced without any appreciable supernormal residue to the very natural processes of incubation, initiated by exterior suggestions and maintained by the desire of the medium to reply to the expectations of her environment, and fed by her stock of latent information and childhood memories, how can we be sure that it is not the same in those cases, much less extraordinary, which fill the libraries of spiritists? And where is the proof that the automatists who have lent their table or their pencil to all these compositions proceeding from the "other world" have not been able to draw them from their own depths, and to be themselves the authors?[1] Now, the least thought of this kind suffices to shake the confidence which one would have in the demonstration of spiritism through these pretended works of discarnates. I know, indeed, that a contrary proof—that of their terrene origin—is sometimes just as impossible to furnish. We are not

[1] Such an explanation seems, however, hardly to explain some of the books automatically written by mediums—such as *Nature's Divine Revelations*, by Andrew Jackson Davis, and *The Arcana of Nature*, by Hudson Tuttle—both written when their authors were ignorant country boys—yet in their teens—but containing, in several instances, facts which the scientific world did not as yet accept. Thus, Tuttle's *Arcana* was finished when he was in his eighteenth year (p. 55) and contained many striking and then unknown scientific facts. It was quoted by both Büchner (*Force and Matter*, p. 123, etc.) and Darwin (*Descent of Man*, p. 178). See Tuttle's own account of the manner of production of this book in the *Arcana*, new ed., with Introduction by Dr. Emmet Densmore, pp. 39–64.—Tr.

always able to assign with certainty, in particular cases, the initial suggestions which have given the impetus to the incubation—the emotional tendencies which have directed it, the varied conditions whose influence it has suppressed. A deep obscurity reigns too often upon these various points. Very rare are those persons gifted with psychic power who take the trouble to analyze their own phenomena as did Miss Freer and Miss F. Miller,[1] in order to attempt to discover a natural explanation in the circumstances of their past life, their temperament, etc. Whether from amnesia, idleness of mind, or lack of will—due to the fear of seeing this aureole of mystery vanish from "the Beyond," whence issue their automatisms—the majority of mediums do not furnish us much real information as to the sources—often very ordinary—of their information; and the believing spiritists who share, in a higher degree, this instinctive aversion to the light—too incredulous of scientific explanations—do not usually assist the seeker in his attempts at a "naturalization of the supernatural" (to use an expression of Podmore's), even if they do not try to thwart them; also we are often reduced to the most meager hints as to the genesis and real evolution of the mediumistic compositions. But that ought not to make us forget the methodological principle that the *onus probandi*, the task of demonstration, depends

[1] Miss Goodrich-Freer, *Essays in Psychical Research*, London, 1899; Miss Frank Miller, "Some Instances of Subconscious Creative Imagination," *Journal*, Amer. S. P. R., June, 1907.

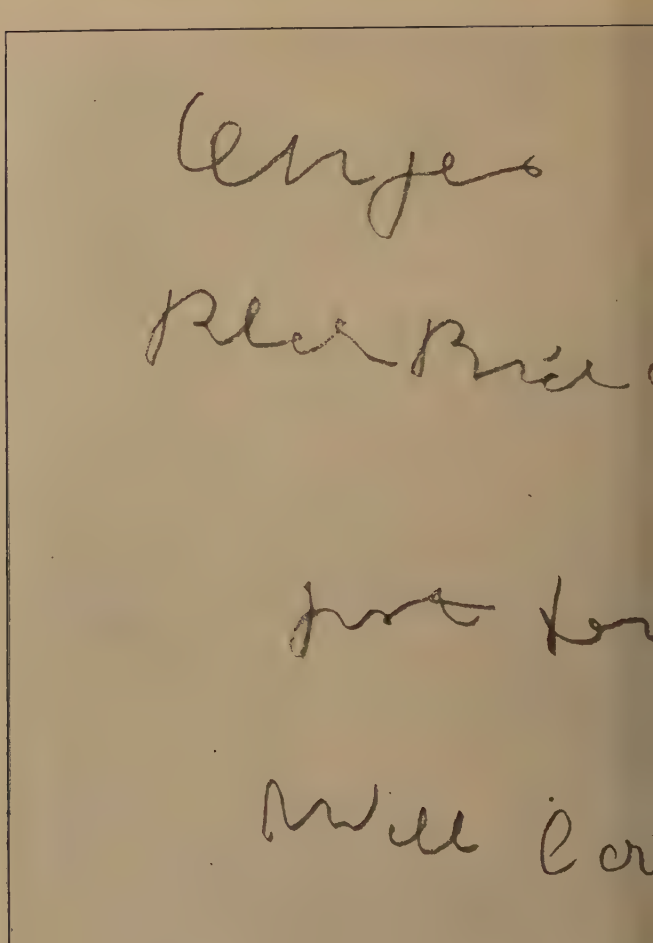
upon the partisans of the supernormal, not upon those who uphold ordinary explanations; it is for the first to establish positively that the work obtained by their mediums escapes the normal laws of the phenomena of incubation and subconscious "blossoming."

With regard to the following examples, I shall limit myself to some features which seem to indicate that they may be traced to the process of incubation, presenting nothing supernormal. I reserve for the last the case of Dickens, upon which I have something more to say; and I commence with that of Mrs. Smead, which has suggested to me many of the preceding reflections.

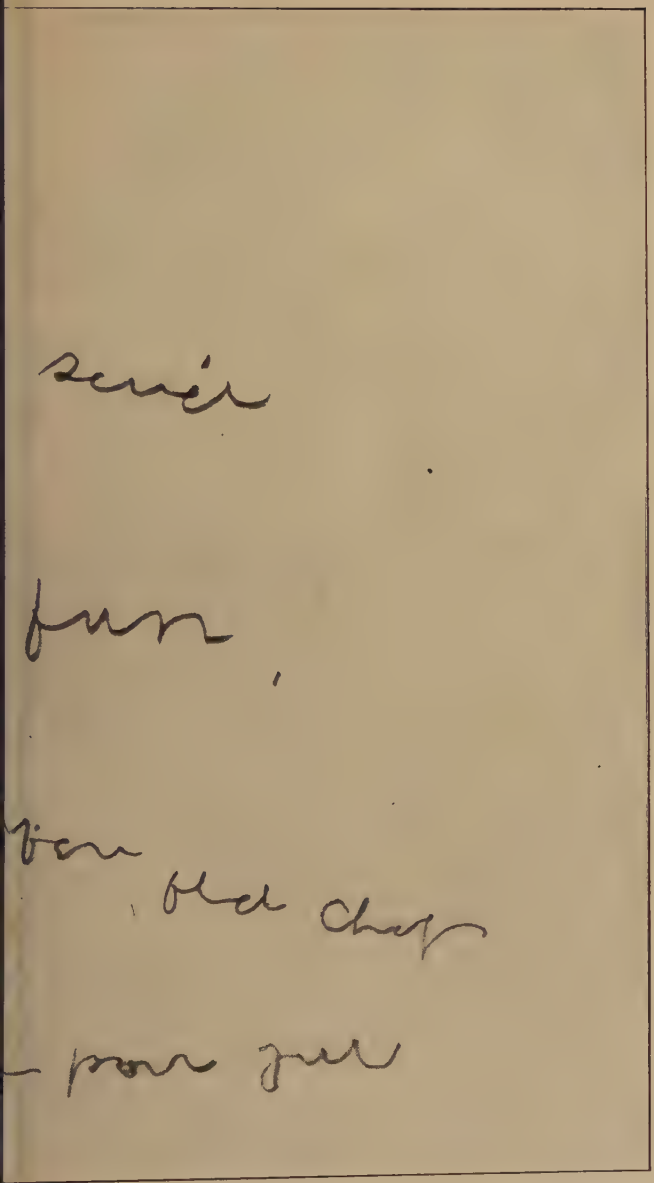
The Case of Mrs. Smead, Etc.[1]

This American lady, wife of an Anglican clergyman, cultivated automatic writing and drawing as an amateur. The communications which she received from her three children and her brother-in-law (con-

[1] See J. H. Hyslop, "The Smead Case," *Annals of Psychical Science*, September, 1906; "Apparent Subconscious Fabrication," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, December, 1906; "A Preliminary Report on the Trance Phenomena of Mrs. Smead," *Proceedings*, Amer. S. P. R., vol. i, part 3, etc. Outside her Martian romance, Mrs. Smead has had many other communications from supposed discarnate minds. Dr. Hyslop, who has given to all these documents a profound examination, and who has devoted to them a lengthy report, believes that they include items of spirit communication; so that he considers the mediumship of Mrs. Smead to be an intermediary case between the pseudo-mediumship of Mlle. Smith and the true mediumship of Mrs. Piper. I am not competent to pronounce upon this.



"DR. HODGSON" WRI
(Oh yes, Black Bird, I said just for fun. W



THROUGH MRS. PIPER
rrington, old chap, I am glad to know you.)

cerning people, things, and the language of the planet Mars) came to her at two separate times, after an interruption of five years. The first time was in 1895, a short time after the publication of an article, very widely read, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, on the "Canals on the Planet Mars," by the astronomer Lowell; and the second time in 1900, when the volume *From India*, etc., was in the house, but hidden, so it is said, from Mrs. Smead in order not to influence her by the Martian designs or the drawings of Mlle. Smith. Mr. and Mrs. Smead do not appear to admit that these exterior circumstances have taken any part in the birth of their astronomical romance; but one must at least acknowledge that such coincidences are very singular; and as the Martian revelations of Mrs. Smead present the same character of puerility and naïve imagination as those of Mlle. Smith—although they differ greatly in details—I cannot but think that the psychological explanation is at basis the same. . . .

The "Divine Revelations" at Geneva in 1854

When the great spiritistic epidemic raged over Europe in the middle of the last century Geneva was by no means spared. The only monument which exists as a memory of this fever is a collection of communications from Christ and his angels, obtained by means of the table by a little group of ministers and professors, with their families. This volume, of a mysticism quite orthodox, but insipid and foolish enough to give one nausea, seems to be a bad con-

glomerate of pious sermons of the epoch of the Renaissance. If we did not know how spiritistic practices are apt to lead astray the investigators' heads, as well as their tables, one could never understand how intelligent people, respectful of religion, dared to publish such mediocrities, giving them out as "Words of the Saviour," "Hymn of the Angel Gabriel," "Song of Love of the Son of God for His Church," etc. . . . Psychologically, this rubbish has only interested me as an example of the low level of degradation which frequently characterizes mediumistic productions—they reflect the ideas and the sentiments of the circle and the environment, but in an inferior manner and form, and indicate a relapse into the condition of childhood.

The "Spirit Teachings" of Stainton Moses

We know that Mr. Moses was first a clergyman of the Anglican Church—very orthodox and rigid in his beliefs. Later, however, he developed mediumship in his own person—physical phenomena and automatic writing. "Spirits" used his table and his hand to communicate to him their teaching. But the philosophico-religious doctrines which they revealed to him formed such a contrast, by reason of their breadth of view, their symbolical interpretation of the Christian dogmas, their whole tendency, in a word, made such a contrast to the traditional theology which Moses believed, that his conversion to this teaching was not accomplished without great anguish. It was

only after some months of resistance, of interior wars, of discussions with his spiritual guide, that he gave himself up to it, and thenceforth brought to the defense of his new faith all the ardor, the conviction, the high intellectual and moral qualities which he had placed at the service of the old. Does it not seem impossible to pretend to trace back to an ordinary process of incubation, in the case of Stainton Moses, the genesis of these automatic messages, of a content so contrary to his personal ideas, and of which the supposed authors offer all the appearances of well-characterized individuals, conscious of themselves, independent of himself? . . .

Nevertheless, apart from the fact that these so-called discarnates have never given a positive proof of their identity, and, setting aside their physical manifestations, of which I shall speak later, they do not in any way surpass the play of dramatic personification of subconscious imagination—the opposition between their doctrine and that to which Moses was accustomed did not exceed the conflict which might have been created by the reflections of his own mind. Very intelligent, well read, having traveled, it is difficult to believe that Moses had never been shaken in the narrowness of his orthodoxy by interior doubts in this contact with different minds. These doubts, suppressed in some measure by his constancy and obstinacy, must have accumulated in the subconscious mind and become organized into a system of affirmation, very different from his primitive beliefs,

and finally attained a degree of tension sufficient to cause their eruption in his trances. These were stimulated by the suggestions of the environment, and plenty of time was allowed for the necessary subconscious elaboration. From the moment in which Stainton Moses began the study of spiritism to that when he declared his mediumship there elapsed about two years filled with reading, experiments, and discussions upon this subject with his friends, the Speers, with whom he lived. Often he proposed questions to his spirit guides upon points of detail, to which they only replied some days later. It is said that even superior spirits sometimes have the need of reflecting a certain length of time upon problems which are placed before them. But as Moses was also a superior mind, quite capable himself of finding a solution to these problems, I do not see what advantage there is in proposing these difficulties when he himself might just as well have solved them. To sum up, before admitting the true supernormal origin of the automatically revealed "Spirit Teachings" of Stainton Moses, we must first of all be sure that he himself was not capable of elaborating them subconsciously. To my mind, he was quite capable.

Posthumous Discourses of Abelard

In these messages, obtained by means of automatic writing, this illustrious scholar has so far lost his personality of eight centuries ago that we no longer recognize it. He shows himself feeble and weak when

interrogated upon universalities or conceptualism. In turn, he preaches doctrines perfectly conformable to those in vogue in actual spiritistic circles. Some signs in the Introduction of the volume permit the psychologist to divine, to a certain extent, the natural concatenation of events which brought the imagination of Mme. de V—— and her medium to personate this particular character rather than any other person who had died. Curious only as an example of automatic lucubration, this book has no evidential value, not even, I imagine, for the convinced spiritist, who has not yet lost all critical judgment.

The Posthumous Romance of Dickens

Death surprised Dickens on the 8th of July, 1870, while he was writing his story *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the monthly publication of which was interrupted at the most critical point. But three years later an American journal announced that the dead writer was about to finish this novel at Brattleboro, Vermont, by means of the hand of a young medium named T. P. James, a mechanic without education, who had never even read the published section during the life of Dickens. The finished work appeared some months afterward,[1] its posthumous section being longer than the other, and presented such a continuity

[1] "*The Mystery of Edwin Drood.* Complete, by Charles Dickens, Brattleboro, Vt., published by T. P. James, 1874." Such is the title on the first page. It was advertised thus: "Dickens' most charming novel—the novel of the season. Price, one dollar!"

so well imitating the manner of thought and style and even certain peculiarities of orthography that spiritists the world over did not have the least doubt that it was certainly Dickens himself who had returned to dictate, word for word, to his medium the end of *Edwin Drood*. Also, this book has remained in their eyes "a unique production in the annals of literature" according to the judgment of Aksakof, who quoted this story in his collection of cases,[1] giving it as one of the most convincing cases on record. Lastly, M. Delanne has not hesitated to place it among those facts which respond to all the exigencies of the case on account of the value of the witnesses as well as by reason of the striking demonstration which it affords. It is a pity that M. Delanne, ordinarily so prudent and so well informed, should appear to ignore the conclusion to which Mme. Fairbanks arrived when she undertook, some years ago, to verify this strange history, which neither Aksakof nor his successors took the trouble to do. I shall permit myself to recall here the results of her inquiry.[2]

First of all, those chiefly interested—that is, the members of the Dickens family, had knowledge indeed,

[1] *Animism and Spiritism*, Paris, 1895, pp. 326–332 and 543.

[2] K. Fairbanks, "Le Cas Spirite de Dickens," *Arch. de Psychol.*, T. I., June, 1892, p. 411. Mme. Kama Fairbanks, who was one of the most distinguished members of our university . . . was by her personal relations as well as her literary aptitudes, as much as her impartial curiosity in the problems of supernormal psychology, particularly qualified to investigate this particular case. I epitomize the contents of her article.

of the story in question, but never took it seriously.[1] And at Brattleboro, even, where we for long lost trace of the medium, T. P. James, there exists a tradition according to which he was only a figurehead, and served as a mere amanuensis for a man gifted with great literary talent who also lived in this town, and who ought to have been the veritable author of the continuation of *Edwin Drood*. There is nothing, however, to prove the truth of this tradition, which appears suspicious, and might well spring from the tendency of the public, ignorant of metapsychic phenomena, to explain by the "probable" things which they do not understand. Let us suppose, then, that it may be false, and that T. P. James, instead of being a simple *nom-de-plume*, was really a medium for automatic writing. Still, it is apparent to me (1) that Dickens himself had nothing to do with the affair, and (2) that everything is easily explained by processes of latent incubation and subconscious imagination in the medium himself. I take these points successively.

1. Many facts hinder us (even admitting spiritism) from considering Dickens the author of the second part of *Edwin Drood*. First of all, in his so-called "Preface" from beyond the veil we do not find him there either as a writer or as a man. The expressions and sentiments, childishly vindictive, which are found

[1] This explains how a friend of Dickens, quoted by Dr. Surbled, did not hear of this history, and believed that the family of the novelist was equally ignorant of it. See Dr. Surbled, *Spirits and Mediums*, Paris, 1901, pp. 154, 155.

in the "address to skeptics," betray, without meaning to, the tone of mind of the medium and of his surroundings. Then, in the novel itself, the copy of the style, though remarkable, is not without its faults. "In my opinion," said Mme. Fairbanks, "it is very difficult to judge whether this is truly Dickensesque or not. There are certainly very successful passages, such as the scenes between the two women, Billickin and Twinkleton. But there are others which are just the contrary. I do not think, *e.g.*, that Dickens would have made little Bessie Padler, brought up by a woman who could not pronounce a sentence correctly, speak as she is made to speak—or, rather, discourse and preach as the medium T. P. James did!" Finally, and especially, it is known that Forster, the biographer of Dickens, discovered among the papers of the latter a whole scene in *Edwin Drood*, written in advance, and destined to figure later in the novel.[1] Now, not in any part of the volume by the medium has Mme. Fairbanks met with more than three new persons whom Dickens had not introduced. It is, however, incredible that the author, while remembering so clearly the part of the volume already published, should have completely forgotten the chapter written and left in MSS.; and since his avowed aim in returning to finish his work in this mediumistic way was to prove survival he would not have failed, as a striking proof of identity, either to reproduce this scene—as yet un-

[1] J. Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*. This scene is entitled, "How Mr. Sapsea ceased to be a member of the Eight Club."

published—or, if his plan had changed, to at least make an illusion to it in reintroducing the same personages, or of explaining to his medium why he renounced it and no longer wished to use it. In short, the fact that this fragment from the hand of Dickens, refound by Forster, shines by its complete absence in the posthumous novel constitutes a strong argument against the authenticity of the latter.

2. There is, on the contrary, nothing opposed to the theory that this posthumous part of the novel was elaborated by the medium himself. It may be objected that he was incapable of this *tour de force*. It is true that in his Preface he represents himself as an uneducated man; but this expression, if taken too literally, would be contradicted by the pages composed by himself, which are not those of an uncultivated man; *i.e.*, an American, even if he is a simple workman, born in Boston—a scholarly town *par excellence*—and who was educated until he was thirteen years of age, acquires a considerable book knowledge, some literary taste, and an idea of writing. As for the assertion that he was not cognizant of the first part of *Edwin Drood*, this may be a false report; for, in the work even, as well as in the advertisement quotations accumulated upon the cover of the book, T. P. James does not pretend that he has not read Dickens and his last novel. Now it is evident that if he had not read Dickens he would most probably have boasted of his accomplishment, because that would have rendered his performance much more extraordinary, and have

added an enormous weight to his spiritistic hypothesis of the return of Dickens himself. Finally, even if it is true, as reported, that T. P. James had never before manifested either taste or interest for literature, that would not at all exclude the possibility of latent aptitude suddenly awakened by the reading of *Edwin Drood*. We have seen these unexpected blossomings of latent talent; let us not forget that the medium had two and a half years to imbibe the original work of the author, and in letting this "simmer"—without counting the six months afterward employed in automatic writing—three years in all were completed.[1] We must confess that this greatly reduces its marvelous character.

To sum up, this case, so miraculous, of which the spiritists have made too much for thirty years without ever having verified it, returns to them again in the most cruel manner without having furnished any proof of its truly spiritistic origin.

What are we to conclude from the various examples which have been passed in review? I will not deny dogmatically and *a priori* the possibility of works being really composed by spirits—that the autom-

[1] The idea of continuing *Edwin Drood* only germinated in the subconsciousness of T. P. James after the monthly publication of this novel had been interrupted by the death of Dickens, July 8, 1870. They tell us, on the other hand (see Aksakof, pp. 327, 328), that from the end of October the medium obtained messages from Dickens in the course of nine writing séances, and that he finished his work between Christmas, 1872, and July, 1873.

atists only transmit such books to us (with or without the mixture of their own nature). But it seems to me prudent before affirming the reality of the fact to expect that we may at least have some examples furnished us which are truly proved to be beyond all suspicion—I do not say of voluntary fraud, but simply of subconscious incubation which is perfectly natural. And, provisionally, I prefer to believe that all the manifestations of spirits which reveal themselves through a medium are, in the last analysis, but the response of the imagination to his secret preoccupations and to the desires, sometimes unconfessed, of his heart.[1]

[1] It is curious to note that Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *The Puzzle of Dickens's Last Plot* (London, 1905), does not even refer to the story as completed by the *soi-disant* Dickens—through T. P. James. In view of Mr. Lang's familiarity with and interest in things psychic, this seems a strange omission; but perhaps it was intentional?—TR.

V

THE IDENTITY OF SPIRITS

IN the present chapter I purpose to deal with the objective value of the so-called proofs of identity which spirits offer to us. Unfortunately my personal experience has hardly furnished me anything worthy of discussion. The most striking cases which I have encountered were contained in the mediumship of Mlle. Smith, and I have shown elsewhere their weakness.[1] Outside of these, all that I have gathered have appeared to me to be better explained by the hypothesis of simple imaginary reconstruction within the subconsciousness of the medium due to auto-suggestion. I will give two or three unpublished specimens of these products of subliminal activity which I have gathered together; then I shall discuss some of the later cases which have appeared in the spiritistic press and occupied prominent positions as good proofs of identity, though their fallacious character appeared to me obvious. Finally, in order not to leave the reader under the impression of a too unfavorable skepticism, I shall say a few words upon certain recent observations which seem to open up

[1] *From India to the Planet Mars.*

new perspectives in these researches without in any way lessening the doubts which I yet experience as to their proving the more completely the identity of spirits.

I. UNPUBLISHED CASES

Imitations of Amiel's Journal, Etc.

Spiritistic literature abounds in posthumous works in the true sense of the word; that is to say, composed by certain authors after death; works which the public, to whom they are addressed, consider authentic, but which psychology believes to be simply subliminal creations—automatic productions—due to latent incubation and invention by mediums more or less saturated with the works of these authors, or familiar with their biographies and their characters. . . . The mediumistic fancy does not always content itself with imitating the ideas of dead authors, but also elaborates and extends them, and perverts, to some extent, these ideas, conforming them to those of the medium. It must be understood that, enlightened by the added revelations of the "Other Side," many famous personages regret their past lives and state that they are now converted to spiritism. The finest example of mediumistic writing of this character is, probably, the posthumous work of Dickens—the completion of *Edwin Drood*.

I have, however, received one or two communications of this character, sent to me by mediums living

in the vicinity of Geneva, of which the two following are, perhaps, the most interesting:

March 27, 1892.

Henri Frédéric Amiel: "Mademoiselle, your brother who died some years ago has brought me to you without first having asked your permission. He knows that I have wished more than once to enter into communication with you since you read my *Journal*, because I wish to understand you better." Upon which Amiel continued: "You seek, you say, to understand better the fragments of my *Journal Intime* which have been published. You will have some trouble in doing so. In it you encounter a being vague, indefinite, myriad-faced, impressionistic. Even I myself do not know how to picture myself. Happily, it is this very vagueness which has helped me to find myself—*myself*—which I always knew existed, but which always eluded me. I see now how feeble was my life; and I think that if I had my life to live over again I should know better how to utilize the gifts which God had given me. I cannot say too strongly to those yet on earth: Act! Do not hesitate! One loses time and strength in considering for too long a time projects before making up one's mind whether or not to attempt them. Create energies; teach the will; act, act! It is your duty, and you have the necessary strength. . . . We hope to see less evil upon the earth, but for that the true friends of goodness must prevail. Here I do

not lack sincere affections; I let things go, instead of dreading that they will escape me. You see this incessant fear which followed me prevented me from acquiring anything from the very fear of losing it. It was a form of egoism. I was afraid of suffering, and I have justly, for that very reason, augmented my inward suffering. I leave you! *Au revoir.*"

Jean Calvin

It was a short time after these séances that M. Denis, the great French apostle of spiritism, came to Geneva; and the spiritists naturally hoped much from his coming in the way of convincing us skeptics. Mlle. X—— received, on this occasion, various messages welcoming in advance this great event; among others these:

October 29, 1892.

Jean Calvin: "Yes, it is indeed the reformer of Geneva who is here. I have journeyed to see what has become of the Huguenot faith among the greater part of my citizens. But I see help coming, and I abjure you to seize it. It is clericalism which has corrupted the masses! It is for spiritism to repair the evil! It is not an easy thing, I know, to transform suddenly the foundations of moral and religious life; but it is the duty of every one to consecrate a part of his life to these things. . . ."

There is nothing in these communications which might not have come quite naturally from the mind

of a cultured Genevese lady, energetic and spiritual, such as Mlle. X——. I dare to say, indeed, knowing her intelligence, and knowing also the literary and philosophical and religious works which she is capable of reading, that if she had taken the pains to execute consciously a composition upon the theme of the actual thoughts of Calvin and Amiel she would have expressed these great minds in a language and with developments more worthy of them, and of herself, than that which her mediumistic automatisms took. The same remark applies, in my estimation, to other communications—which she had indeed wished to show me. Mlle. X—— is one of those cases in which the products of the subconsciousness remain in value and quality very much below those which are given by the normal personality; there is a distinct deterioration, in fact, in the tone of the mediumistic messages.

The Posthumous Manifestations of Carl Vogt

The illustrious savant and professor, Carl Vogt, died at Geneva on the 5th day of February, 1895. The journey into the other world of this famous corypheus of materialism could not but inspire some spiritistic imaginations. It is Mme. Darel, and in a less degree Mme. Saxo (then in the full bloom of their mediumship), who had the privilege of serving as intermediaries for this illustrious savant half a dozen times in the space of about two years. I was not present at the first two manifestations, not yet know-

ing the mediums; but I had the honor of being specially invited to the later sittings. Mme. Darel and Mme. Saxo always affirmed that they had never seen nor heard of Vogt in their lives. But outside of the possibility of lapses of memory (cryptomnesia), which must not be lost sight of in mediumistic temperaments, the personality of the celebrated professor was too well known in Geneva—too many people, his pupils or his occasional hearers, when speaking of him came irresistibly to imitate his great voice, his repartee, as clever as it was jovial, his Homeric laugh, unique in all the world—for one easily to admit that these two ladies had never heard of his peculiarities. As for the remainder of the resemblances to the original which adorned their reconstruction of the dead, these were more amusing than delicate or true.

The first manifestation of Vogt took place between his death and his burial, at a séance at the home of M—— K——, an old pupil and friend of the savant. The medium (Mme. Darel) had her hands alone on a small table, and the messages came to her mentally (in the auditory or verbo-motor fashion). Unfortunately, only a verbal and very incomplete record was kept of this séance, from which it is impossible to know whether the deceased appeared spontaneously or following an express wish or invocation. But this has little importance, for the reason that the death of the savant was already well known in Geneva. This is what has been preserved of these early communications of Vogt:

"According to your request, I shall try and examine the position in which I find myself. But to define it clearly is not yet possible for me. The transition has been too abrupt; my poor brains are in a state of stupefaction. Do not accuse them, therefore, of ingratitude."

"When did you first perceive that you were not in the body?"

"Last night. I awakened at about two o'clock; then, subduing what I believed to be a hallucination, I saw, stretched upon a bed, *my body!* The thing appeared to me so preposterous that I tried to feel it; and I realized for the first time that I was an impalpable being! What, Vogt, the skeptic, who had believed himself to be brain and nerves only! And he thinks, he acts, without the instrumentality of these latter! To believe in matter so implicitly and to be deceived so grossly! My poor head will jump off!"

"Aside from this astonishment, have you not suffered?"

"No! I suffer at having wasted my intelligence, passing by truth! Misfortune; misfortune!"

"Did you find friends there who awaited you?"

"My mother and my sister are near to me. Their caresses and their joys have reanimated me, for I was so absorbed in my reflections, so un-oriented—more than that, so unhappy—that it would have been better for me to have died completely." (The communicator then finished by expressing his regrets that he had championed materialism so consistently, and stated

in reply to questions that he had been drawn to the medium by a species of magnetic attraction.)

The second manifestation of Vogt took place some months later, in a séance which Mme. Darel gave at the house of one of her friends, with Mme. Saxo. I assisted at the last four séances, which were more or less full of drollery. Here are extracts from the detailed accounts of these séances:

At the house of Mme. Darel, with Mme. Saxo. The first part of the séance was occupied by two visions of Mme. Saxo; then came a third, which she described thus:

"A tall gentleman, with gray hair, with a round felt hat; he laughs; he says, '*hin, hin, hin!*' He says that he is Professor Vogt; he seems very jubilant; he is cunning and sly; he places one hand on the shoulder of M. Flournoy; he moves the other up and down, turning toward Mme. Darel; he makes us understand that he wishes her to place herself at the table and make it go. He wishes to speak to her."

Here the vision ceases, and Mme. Saxo urges Mme. Darel to try the table. Mme. Darel grants her request, after some urging, for she has an unpleasant memory of the violence of the first two manifestations. Indeed, scarcely has she seated herself and placed her hands on the little table, than this latter is moved violently and precipitated in my direction—as though asking me to take part in the manifestations—while Mme. Darel complains of pains in her forearm, even to the shoulder. The furniture, under her hand, comes,

by five or six violent jumps, toward me, which obliges Mme. Darel to stretch out her arms to their full extent. . . . Finally she commences to repeat to us the words which Vogt said to her internally, through isolated words or little groups of words—always preceded by violent movements of the table—very different from its usual rhythmical tapping, and followed by a complete sentence. . . . (Mme. Darel then repeated the words she mentally heard coming from Professor Vogt.)

"What are you doing with the learned faculty—cutting out bibs for them? If you like, we will begin with a course in anatomy. . . . Commence with *me*—my brain, my kidneys, my muscles! . . . oh, not much. . . . This *is* a new Vogt. Which side will you dissect first?"

Mme. Saxo here stated that the table was being moved about in such a way that she was becoming fatigued, and asked if it might not be modified a little. He replied:

"I would do anything to please you, madam."

Immediately the table rapped more gently, upon which it continued: "Is it not perfect? The bear is growing tame. The tide rises . . . the tide rises; do you know why the equinoctial tide? . . ." (Here was a pause so prolonged that we decide, on account of the lateness of the hour, to conclude—asking him if he would consent to retire for the evening and to return at the next séance, and tell us his impressions as to his new conditions.) He replied immediately:

"Good Lord! That is all that I ask. *Au revoir!*"

His departure was manifested by a curious movement of the table, turning itself on to its side by several jumps, as though to separate itself from us completely.

January 24. Since the last time, Mme. Darel gave one séance at the house of M—— K——, where Vogt came at first; but he said nothing of consequence, and almost immediately gave up his place to another "spirit." From the beginning of this séance Mme. Darel expressed the fear that Vogt would not return. . . . This was realized. Soon she said, "I am sure it is he"—complaining of a painful pressure upon her forearms, which rapidly increased, as if some one had seized them forcibly and tried to restrain her. The table began also to tremble with violence. As the medium appeared to suffer from it, I stated that I thought "Vogt" had better go away—as we would stop the séance rather than allow her to be so tormented; to which she heard Vogt reply in anger: "You are still droll! Why did you tell me to return? Why? Go on, explain yourself!" But the suggestion of his departure operating, he did not persist further in staying; as at the last séance, the table made a series of jumps, and the control gave place to another discarnate, with slower and more gentle movements.

[At the later manifestations of Vogt he replied in much the same strain, keeping up, generally, a fund of humor and some roughness in his manner and a strain of coarseness in his jokes. At the sixth séance

he was replaced by another, and did not return again.—TR.]

I feel that I must apologize for giving this case so much in detail, but it will at least serve to illustrate the type of communications which I received from Professor Vogt, and which, considering that I did not know him very well—although we were near neighbors in the laboratory—can hardly be called *à propos*. There is, at all events, nothing, in these communications, so far as I can see, which would in any way warrant us in supposing that the illustrious Professor himself was there in person.

Other Examples

There was hardly a well-known man living in Geneva who did not manifest to me, at one time or another, through some medium; but in every case I have found that the manifestations invariably corresponded to the medium's idea of the deceased person, and not with my ideas of him. It was thus with the noted physiologist Schiff, who, when I saw him in his laboratory, was always original, piquant, and full of philosophical ideas of great value; but in his communications through Mme. Darel he spoke the same balderdash as Professor Vogt. A deceased counselor of state, with whom I had had personal business dealings on different occasions, and who belonged to a group of well-known and regular absinth-drinkers, could give me no other proof of his identity through the pencil of Mme. Saxo than the drawing of a clock marking ten minutes to twelve, with these words in large capitals, "Let us

have one!"—a sign which every one of us assuredly recognized at once! Another political man, the late M. Dufour, with whom I had never had relations, and whom I did not even know by sight, saluted me like an old acquaintance. Prof. Aug. Bouvier spoke to me simple banalities—not even recalling our past conversations, etc.

In short, I do not find anything in my whole experience which could be even remotely compared with the astounding communications in which the sitters in the Piper case recognized the characteristics of their relatives or friends whom they had lost.[1]

But if I had obtained such messages presenting all the appearances of authenticity I should still hesitate to conclude in favor of their authenticity. At the same time the question would at least be raised as to the identity of my correspondents. But even this is not necessitated by the messages which I received, for in them I can see only the subliminal romances of the various mediums with whom I have obtained sittings.

2. SOME RECENT CASES IN SPIRITISTIC LITERATURE

If I have never obtained authentic messages this does not prove, it is true, that they never occur. My

[1] After many years of patient research, Dr. Hodgson came to the conclusion that, as he expressed it, "there is only one medium—Mrs. Piper." Assuredly she was head and shoulders above all others. I myself have been forced to very much the same conclusion with regard to Eusapia Palladino. In spite of all the accounts of other mediums which I have heard in the past, not one of them has upon investigation even remotely resembled the marvelous manifestations which are seen in her presence.—Tr.

want of success may be due to simple chance or to the fact that my temperament is antipathetic to true spirits, so that my presence might prevent their communications.

But, unfortunately, when we look through the literature of spiritism we are often surprised at the easy manner in which communications are received as authentic (for example, Aksakof, with the case of Dickens!) by many spiritists. This is regrettable, for it has the effect of causing savants to refuse to examine other cases, stronger evidentially, which are certainly well worthy of serious investigation. I give one or two recent cases of the usual type by way of example.

The Nancy Cases

Under the title of "Proofs of the Identity of Personality" the *Revue* of M. Delanne has recently published a series of typtological communications obtained by a group of sitters at Nancy, and remarkable for their precision and exactitude. The anonymous author of this work, and M. Delanne himself, do not doubt the identity of the discarnate who are thus revealed at their séances. Indeed, ever since Bertolf de Ghistelles (a Flemish lord of the eleventh century, who killed his wife, St. Godelive of Bruges,[1] and became a monk to expiate his crime) all the returning spirits, even to the obscure individuals of our time, have taken good care to give indications of their

[1] See *Larousse*, "Godelive."

earthly career which could be ascertained from dictionaries and biographies.[1]

For psychology this collection of veridical cases furnishes a magnificent collection illustrating the phenomena of cryptomnesia (the good faith of the medium being granted). The narrator himself has foreseen this impression. "It will be said to me," remarked he, after the case of Bertolf, "that one of the persons present had already read this history in part and has it in his mind; then, by unconscious pressure, has directed the movements of this table and responded to the questions without knowledge of having done so. But," he objected immediately, "for this to be possible it would be necessary for one of the sitters to be in a state of somnambulism, which was not the case; and, further, none of the sitters had ever opened Larousse, myself excepted, and I am certain that I had not read these biographical notices before."

These objections to the hypothesis of latent memory are typical; they are those to which appeal is always made in the groups of mediumistic experimenters, and

[1] While this may be true in many cases, it is certainly not true in all. In the Piper case, *e.g.*, it has sometimes taken months and months of constant investigation and hundreds of letters to verify the statements made through this medium. But historical personalities seem much less prone to manifest in this country than in Europe, apparently. All intelligent psychical researchers are certainly keenly alive to all these defects in the evidence and possible normal explanations—just as much so as the savants. Indeed, the psychical researchers are, as a matter of fact, the very ones who have pointed out nearly all the objections to and difficulties within spiritism which have been raised in the past.—Tr.

will show what ignorance is often exhibited in spiritistic circles of the phenomena of the subconscious mind and of dissociation. When will we succeed in inculcating in the minds of the spiritistic public, or at least the editors of their periodicals, these two elementary truths?

1. That we can never have a *certainty* of not having stored up subconsciously, while turning over the pages of a dictionary, a mass of information other than that which we are expressly seeking, and that not one of us knows what he has absorbed in the course of his life by sight and hearing without knowing it.

2. That it is not at all necessary for a person taking part in a spiritistic séance to be in a state of somnambulism for the contents of his memory or his latent thoughts to be translated into imperceptible tremblings in his hands, or other phenomena of unconscious expression.

But let us ask whether even placing ourselves in the position of the spiritist we are entitled to believe, in such a case, in the personal presence of Bertolf de Ghistelles rather than in a clever and a unique individuality playing successively all these various rôles. I see none, since, according to the spiritists themselves, the spirit world is full of deceiving spirits, capable of simulating to perfection the personality of others, and of acting and speaking as if they were those people. And the most simple supposition is that behind all these pretended discarnate spirits, which have no other common trait than that of giving

information easily verifiable, there is One, and only one, deceiving spirit, which deceives probably with the excellent intention of giving to this group of people convincing proofs of survival. . . . As to who is the author of this pious fraud, that is another question; but, before seeking in the Beyond, according to the spiritistic custom, it must be proved, first of all, that it is not simply a sub-personality of the medium himself.

I add that on a purely psychological hypothesis the great words *trickery* and *fraud* have no longer any right to be employed, since the simulation is not conscious, and only the credulous accept these manifestations as coming from "spirits." Everything forces us to admit that the mind of the medium producing these messages is in a state of infantile regression, which cannot be compared to the cunning skill of a great impostor, but rather to the candor and simplicity of children who amuse themselves.

Just as our own children, when they play at being merchants or thieves, enter into it with all their hearts and all the resources of their imagination—but they do not, for all that, expect to be treated as *real* thieves or as *real* merchants by the "grown-ups"—so the subconsciousness of the medium (to whom circumstances and surroundings suggest playing at "spirits") sets its wits to work to collect within the depths of its latent memory or in the marginal regions of consciousness all that which will permit it to fabricate these amazing veridical messages.

But this does not say that the subconsciousness itself believes in its own authenticity or wishes to make the sitters believe in it. We must not confound the dualism of the fictitious self and the real self in the actor (or the young child pretending to be some one else) with the duplicity of the forger who seeks to pass himself off as some other person. It is the first of these explanations which I would favor in considering these spiritistic messages.

To conclude the cases of Nancy. What their publication evidences the best is, to my mind, the astonishing incapacity to understand where lies the true heart of the problem displayed by the reporters. For what guarantee does the narrator give us of the authenticity of these revelations? It is, he tells us, that in interviewing spirits by means of tables and writing we have obtained surprising results which, nineteen times out of twenty, have been verified. Verified in what fashion? The exact information relative to Bertolf de Ghistelles has been verified by means of archives and dictionaries. As if *that* were the important question! What concerns us above all is that the information given should not have been seen in a normal manner by the medium or the sitters. That, naturally, the witnesses have not any control of and cannot verify. I do not reproach them for not having accomplished the impossible; but we should not throw powder in the eyes of the reader by stating that we have "verified" the messages when there has been no "verifying" at all as to the essential point.

The Case of Hasdeu

The great Roumanian writer Hasdeu was fifty-three years of age when, one evening in March, 1889, as he was day-dreaming at his work-table, his hand automatically traced the following message, in the writing and above the signature of his only daughter, dead some six months: "I am happy; I love you; we shall see each other again; that should be enough for you now. Julie Hasdeu."

This communication, which was followed by messages almost daily from the deceased to her father, made Hasdeu a convinced spiritist. To speak truly, he had always been one in reality, according to his own later declarations. But this finally convinced him.

[The detailed history of this case is then given. Hasdeu's father had been a distinguished linguist, and had in mind a standard dictionary of the Roumanian language; but unfortunately he died prematurely. His son was a historian; but when half through his *History of the Roumanian People* his desire to finish this work suddenly left him, and he plunged into the compilation of a vast dictionary, which he naturally thought was prompted by the spirit of his father. He felt that he was forced to do so. Professor Flournoy analyzes this case, and comes to the conclusion that it may readily be explained by known psychological processes. The most striking incident was, however, the following: While

attending one séance, the medium, who spoke not a word of Russian, passed into trance and wrote several Russian sentences signed by the father. These urged him to complete his great works which he had lately thought of giving up. Coming through another source than his own hands, this naturally appeared very convincing to M. Hasdeu. And, indeed, it evidently appeared very remarkable to Professor Flournoy, for he writes concerning it as follows:]

We know very well that a good medium is able to mirror the thoughts, conscious and subliminal, of the sitters, acting as a sort of channel of expression for them; and if we are astonished that this mental transmission enables a medium in trance to write a language unknown to him (which is always subject to doubt because of the possibilities of cryptomnesia) the same difficulty presents itself on the spiritistic hypothesis; for the invasion or subjugation of the organism of a medium by a psychic complex belonging to a strange individual is not more easy to explain if that individuality be a spirit of the dead than if it is or belongs to one of the sitters in flesh and blood. And in this equally difficult question there is no reason to attribute to the discarnate or to the spirit world phenomena which can as readily be explained by the phenomena of our empirical world.

The Manifestations of Hodgson Through Mrs. Piper

The case of Mrs. Piper is not new; it has given birth to a considerable mass of literature during the

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latter quarter of a century. The posthumous manifestations of Hodgson are among those which most vitally interest us at the present time. It is well known that this excellent observer had for a number of years especially devoted himself to a study of this famous medium of Boston, whose phenomena had converted him to spiritism. He had made a special study of this case, and became absolutely familiar with the nature of her trance and the complications, or difficulties, which seemed to oppose the clear sending of messages from the discarnate. Also, he had often said that if he died first he would be enabled to communicate through this medium better than any of those who had gone before, knowing her and the necessary conditions of communicating so well.

This did not fail to happen. Hodgson having suddenly died in his full mental and physical vigor (December 20, 1905), eight days had scarcely elapsed before he commenced to return in the trances of Mrs. Piper; and he has not ceased from that time to present himself at a large number of her séances in a manner perfectly recognizable to those who knew him well. But is it really he, or could this be a fabricated personification—created by the subconsciousness of Mrs. Piper, who certainly had all the time possible to imbibe the character of Hodgson during the long years of their work together? Cruel enigma! In the hope of solving it, the detailed records of these séances from his death until the 1st of January, 1908, were handed over to Prof. William

James, probably better qualified than any one else to appreciate them. For he knew equally well the medium, whom he discovered and first investigated, and the deceased, who was one of his intimate friends.

I do not know whether the spiritists are very satisfied with the conclusions of this illustrious psychologist, whose name they constantly quote, perhaps too freely, among their authorities of note. The report of Professor James, indeed, recognizes clearly that if one already admits the reality of intervention from the other side (basing this belief upon the multitude of supernormal phenomena with which the history of humanity is completely filled) nothing hinders one from believing also the communications of Hodgson as coming from him—not forgetting that the organism of Mrs. Piper has much trouble in transmitting the messages from spirits, mixing with them her own automatic tendencies in a most perplexing manner. But Professor James insists equally upon the fact that, considered in themselves, the messages of the so-called Hodgson do not furnish any decisive proof whatever as to their authenticity. . . .[1]

The "Note" contributed by Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr.

[1] This is not strictly accurate. In his Report (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxiii, pp. 120, 121) James says: "*I myself feel as if an external will to communicate were probably there;* that is, I find myself doubting . . . that Mrs. Piper's dream-life, even equipped with 'telepathic' powers, accounts for all the results found. But if asked whether the will to communicate be Hodgson's or some mere spirit-counterfeit of Hodgson, I remain uncertain and await more facts—facts which may not point clearly to a conclusion for fifty or a hundred years."—Tr.

Piddington upon the attempts made during the visit of Mrs. Piper to London to see whether the so-called Hodgson would manifest himself through her and remember the friends whom he had known in England, was still less favorable, these attempts only having given a negative result. And the personal observations of Sir Oliver Lodge, who is a convinced spiritist, did not prove to him the authenticity of the messages from Hodgson through Mrs. Piper.

To sum up, one sees that this case, from which one might have expected much toward the solution of the spiritistic problem, since it meant the combination of an unusually powerful medium with a deceased person of unequaled competence who had decided to manifest himself, if that were possible, has not advanced the question a step. We must await in patience, says Professor James, the advent of more facts, facts which may necessitate a century or more of study, before we can begin to think that we see clearly.

Other Cases

The spiritistic publications—books and reviews—have increased so rapidly in later years that it is very difficult to keep one's self *au courant* with the movement when one has other business to attend to. I recognize humbly my inability to deal adequately with the vast literature accumulated dealing with this and other cases. But I will mention a few.

Professor Falcomer, one of the most distinguished propagandists of Italian spiritism, has pointed out a

case to me which he studied very carefully—neglecting no possible means of verification. It is that of his son, G. Capsoni, a provincial deputy, who died October 25, 1903, and who has since furnished many curious manifestations. During his last illness, even, and at the moment of his death, he tried to communicate from a distance with M. Falcomer, and appeared to have succeeded, in the sense that the latter experienced strange phenomena, auditory and visual (raps, apparitions, etc.), which coincided with events yet unknown to him. Of course this does not prove survival, but only a telepathic action on the part of the moribund person. But there is more. From the end of January, 1904—about three months after the death of Capsoni—a Roman family who practised table-tipping had one day a message from a spirit absolutely unknown to them, which declared itself to be Capsoni, and gave various proofs of identity, which were verified—among others the names and the addresses of his widow, then of one of his friends, etc. M. Falcomer related to me a series of his later communications through the table and by means of direct writing, etc. This was obtained in verse, and in it were found many of his characteristics and his ideas. The weak point of this case is, naturally, the impossibility of proving that the members of the family where Capsoni made his first appearance had no idea of his existence. There is not the slightest doubt as to their good faith; but doubtless one or another of them had a tendency, more or less developed, to produce subconscious phenomena.

How, then, prove that during the three months' interval between the death of Capsoni and his return in spirit his subconsciousness had not had the opportunity of acquiring information about the provincial deputy, either by hearing (conversations, etc.) or by sight (obituary notices, necrologies, etc.)? It is always the same specter of cryptomnesia which confronts us, menacing even the most beautiful cases, and one which we do not know how to banish![1]

In America Professor Hyslop has devoted himself entirely to the study of psychical phenomena, and displays great activity. The *Proceedings* and the

[1] It is easy to charge cryptomnesia, often difficult to prove it. Professor Flournoy gives a chapter in his book to a recital and analysis of several cases of this character—which have such a vital bearing upon mediumistic messages—apparently coming from the discarnate. He mentions the case of Helen Keller, who, when eleven years of age, composed an essay which was almost exactly similar to one read to her some years before; that of Nietsche, whose *Zarathustra* includes details contained in a work of Kerner which the philosopher had read at the age of twelve, etc. He also analyzes the case of Stainton Moses, and shows that many of his test messages (which are included in his book *Spirit Identity*, and which Mr. Podmore in his *Studies in Psychical Research* had tried to show were normally acquired) were doubtless the result of cryptomnesia. The facts had been subconsciously obtained by Mr. Moses, and given by him in trance during a later séance. There is no reason to attribute fraud in such a case, as was thought necessary some years ago, before the facts were so well understood. Other cases, such as that of Mr. Hanna (in *Multiple Personality*), are also discussed, together with some facts in the case of Mlle. Smith. These undoubted cases of cryptomnesia are of great value, showing that one is justified in postulating it and employing it as a "working hypothesis" in other cases of a like character which have a definitely spiritistic import and appearance.—Tr.

Journals of the American Society for Psychical Research (founded in 1907), which appear under his direction, constitute a rich mine of material, where one may find serious evidence of spirit identity; but the selection from these cases of what is evidential and what is not is very difficult, and I am not equal to it. Nobody should be more competent than Professor Hyslop himself, who is at the same time, if I am not deceived, a convinced spiritist and a professional logician, to extract from this half-dozen thick volumes those cases which are most convincing in this respect.

It may be that the special "Bureau of Correspondence" with the other world which Mr. Stead has opened—his famous "Julia's Bureau"—may be an assured source of spirit communications, but we need more information as to the results of his activities.

3. RECENT CROSS-CORRESPONDENCE TESTS

Instead of a negative preconception, as indefensible as the positive *parti pris* of the spiritists, we should always leave the door open for the admission of new facts, or of new methods, capable of establishing the reality of the intervention of the discarnate in our universe, and their veritable identity. . . . And an innate skepticism must not prevent me from examining these cases in detail, and with an impartial mind.

Most important and most fertile appears to me the innovation which has been introduced during the last few years by the following facts, whose discovery we

owe to Miss Alice Johnson, the indefatigable secretary of the Society for Psychical Research. In studying the various scripts obtained from several automatic writers—Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Piper, etc.—she was struck by finding in them points of similarity consisting of veiled resemblances or enigmatical phrases, more or less incomprehensible *taken singly*, but which, when placed together, became clear, and mutually completed one another, like the fragments of a mosaic or the ramifications of one fundamental theme. This singular phenomenon of "cross-correspondence," or of complementary messages, furnished through these different mediums, appeared to Miss Johnson to be a good indication of the action of discarnate intelligences, independent of these various mediums, who endeavored by this means to prove their veritable existence. Indeed, the features of resemblance in the scripts—received almost simultaneously by subjects often separated from one another by a great distance—can not be explained either by pure coincidence or by collusion or by general influences of education, environment, etc. The hypothesis of a telepathic interaction seems equally excluded by the fact that the common thought did not express itself in *identical* terms (which might have passed from one medium to another), but in a mere general similarity, differently expressed by the different mediums.

This reason in itself is not, however, absolutely opposed to the telepathic theory, for the caprice shown by the phenomena of the association of ideas would

suffice to explain the fact that the same idea or impression in passing from one individual to another does not, in fact, burst forth full-blown and complete, but might simply awaken comparisons—association of ideas through contiguity or through resemblance which we might take for wilful disguise, when, as a matter of fact, it is the simple result of the operation of the psycho-physiological mechanism. Phenomena of this character abound not only in normal but also in abnormal psychology. For example, a word spoken in the ear of a sleeper, or an impression, either olfactory or tactile, which he receives, instead of passing over the threshold of his dream would remain below it, and there would create corresponding images or memories. And, in the observations on telepathy, both spontaneous and experimental, it often happens that the initial conscious representation of the agent is expressed in the percipient in equivalents often very different[1] without our knowing which of the two subconsciousnesses is responsible for the translation which takes place.

But there are in these cross-correspondence tests other features which seem to exclude this explanation

[1] In a recent article upon complementary messages Professor Pigou insists, with reason, upon this point, recalling an excellent example: When the experiments in thought-transference at a distance between Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden took place, the latter tried to transmit the image of a Sphinx: it was externalized in the percipient as "Luxor in Egypt." (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxi, p. 62; *Proceedings*, vol. xxiii, p. 295, and the reply to Professor Pigou by the Right Hon. Gerald Balfour, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxv, pp. 28–56.)

by simple telepathy and the passive rôle of the association of ideas; this is their clearly *intentional* character. They (the cross-correspondences) are often accompanied by phrases which indicate the work of a mind or will—the effort of an intelligence which has in view the method of guesswork or riddles, and which urges the readers to seek within the scripts for the key. Here is an example which I choose on account of its brevity, and which I abridge:

On April 11, 1906, Mrs. Holland, in one of her automatic communications, wrote the words "*Eheu fugaces*" (which is the beginning of an ode of Horace). Now, it was found that half an hour before, in another place in England, Mrs. Verrall had received, also through automatic writing, a series of poetical quotations expressing the same idea of flight, and followed by this phrase: "That has been revealed. There is an effort to have the same words this time." This warning seems, indeed, to indicate that the similarity of the idea contained in the very dissimilar texts of these two automatic writers is the result of a predetermined design. . . . The following example is clearer still:

On April 8, 1907, in London, Mrs. Piper pronounced in trance the words "Light in West." The same day, three hours later, Mrs. Verrall, in Cambridge, wrote automatically a message containing these words: "Rosy is the East, and so on. You will find that you have written a message for Mr. Piddington which you did not understand, but he did. Tell him that."

And the same day, a little later, Mrs. Holland, then in Calcutta, received through her pencil a communication in which the question was asked:

"Do you remember that exquisite sky when the afterglow made the East as beautiful and as richly colored as the West—Martha became as Mary, and Leah as Rachel—"

We have, indeed, the impression that this third message—expressing the union of opposite extremes—has in view the first two, which it includes by synthesis; and the second marks in the clearest possible manner the intentional character of this kind of mediumistic rebus. I add that in reducing this case to the above skeleton, in order to simplify it, I have greatly reduced its value and convincing character—*viz.*, by omitting all the ramifications coexistent in the many other automatisms of Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Piper, and Mrs. Verrall, in the spring of 1907, and which make of the messages of these three mediums a singular tissue of common thoughts, reciprocal allusions, subtle interlacings, of which the disentanglement—a marvel of analysis—occupies no less than four hundred pages in the Report of Mr. Piddington.

When we consider in their ensemble all these cases of complementary messages published by Miss Johnson and Mr. Piddington, we cannot deny the fact that we are in the presence of a new and original method, deliberately adopted by some superior intelligence in order to prove its existence independent of the medium which it employs. This intelligence, as a matter of

fact, has not preserved its incognito—it has never ceased to declare itself to be Myers, supported by other "spirits," especially his old friends and *collaborateurs*, who are with him in the other world—Hodgson, Sidgwick, and Gurney. How, then, can we still doubt that these pioneers of metapsychics, too soon cut off from their earthly careers—have preserved beyond the tomb their sense of scientific evidence, their character, their unshakable will, and that they continue, according to their promises, to work with all their energy and their genius, to pierce the wall which separates us from them? It seems incontestable that the "Myers" who haunts the trances of Mrs. Piper is indeed the same "Myers" who inspires the pencil of Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland—for each of these three "Myers" knows, more or less, what the others say or do; and further, the cast of their minds, the literary erudition, the intimate knowledge which they display of the work of the late Frederic Myers, the founder of subliminal psychology, obliges us to identify them with this latter.

But the demon of doubt again makes its appearance. What if the "Myers" who returned to manifest himself through several mediums was not Myers, but only a collective product of their subconsciousnesses, or, more simply still, the special creation of one of them? We know to what degree of apparent independence, of concrete personalization, these somnambulistic fantasies sometimes attain. And we know, also, that all mediums engaged on the cross-correspondence

tests knew Myers more or less when living, or were familiar with his works May we suppose that the regret of his loss, the indelible memory of his striking character, the knowledge of his doctrines and his intentions, the expectation of his possible manifestations, constituted an almost necessary subconscious desire to become an intermediary for such a man? In short, owing to their familiarity with Myers and his writings, and owing, further, to the subconscious dramatization to which I have so often called attention, might we not suppose that in each one of these psychics there arose a personification of Myers more or less perfect? These personifications, numerically different, but of a great intellectual and emotional similarity (since they are always inspired by the same ideas, thoughts, and tendencies, being copied from the same model), might they not be constructed in the different mediums in whom they spring into being along similar lines, and all liable to mutual telepathic influence? And who knows whether one of these ladies, more trained than the others in science, and possessing a turn of mind somewhat resembling that of Myers, might not subconsciously imitate his bent of mind, even to elaborating and carrying out this plan of cross-correspondences, the first germs of which are certainly to be found in the great work of this author. And the one which more nearly approximates the true Myers may dominate the others —in their mutual telepathic relations—and fashion them more completely in its image, bending them to

conform to its ideas and usages, and dictating to them the rôle they must play. . . .

As my book was passing through the press I encountered, in two recent works, certain considerations which support this view of the case, and which seem to me to indicate that it is particularly the subconsciousness of Mrs. Verrall which must be given the credit for inventing the cross-correspondences and of having given birth to the pseudo-Myers.

We have, *first*, the following remarks by M. Marcel Mangin, who asks, "Which is the brain in which are elaborated the cross-correspondences?" and who replies: "It is certainly the brain of a person extremely erudite and literary. And it is infinitely probable that it is, if not always, at least the greater part of the time, that of the distinguished professor of Newnham College, Mrs. Verrall, author of several works on Latin and Greek, keenly interested in psychic studies, and a great admirer of Myers. Here are two minds whose erudition in classical literature, and whose common taste for metapsychics, places them, so to say, in the same class. And it is probable that, in reading the works of Myers, particularly *Human Personality*, Mrs. Verrall was, in consequence, profoundly influenced by them. She shared the faith of the former, and when he died, January, 1901, she could certainly see in this event only a separation. The desire to communicate with him haunts her. A certain time, however, was necessary for the subliminal work to be accomplished. It was May 8th

before her mediumship was sufficiently developed for the communications to commence."

In the *second* place, the following point has been brought out by Professor Pigou. Doctor Verrall, the (living) husband of Mrs. Verrall, had, as an experiment, attempted to transmit to her, mentally, a Greek quotation with which were associated memories of childhood unknown to her. The result was an appearance, in the automatic writings of Mrs. Verrall, during the following months, of various fragments which were related to this suggestion. Now, Professor Pigou shows that, in comparing the ensemble of the fragments in the cross-correspondences obtained through different mediums (in those cases where they had proposed a similar sentence to Myers, to see what he would say of it), there was found no difference in form, in style, in general charm, between the first group, due to the suggestion of a living agent, and the second group, so called, due to the intervention of the discarnate. Professor Pigou concluded from this that all the cross-correspondences of the pretended "Myers" might be due to living agents; to which one might add that their origin will be found, most probably, in Mrs. Verrall, since all these messages seem to present the signs of her influence.[1]

[1] See, however, the Rt. Hon. Gerald Balfour's reply to this position of Professor Pigou (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxv, pp. 42–48 especially), which deals with this test of Doctor Verrall's. He there shows us that his theory can only be sustained if we deal ambiguously with the "intentional factor" of these scripts. It would take too long to summarize the argument here; it should be read in the original.—Tr.

Theory all this, truly; but a theory which has in its favor many analogous facts in psychopathology; and we cannot say that it is destitute of all foundation. We must remember that opposed to it is the spiritistic hypothesis which grants the real identity of "Myers" and his associates. But I recognize fully that it would be ridiculous to pretend to decide so early upon a question so complex. . . . The problem is still enveloped in too many obscurities.

In any case, whether it be the reflected thoughts of discarnate spirits or an ingenious amusement of subliminal imaginations still incarnated, the cross-correspondences present a very interesting problem, which will always serve as the basis for still other and perhaps more ingenious methods by which the discarnate may endeavor to prove to us their identity.

CONCLUSION

What stands out more clearly than anything else in the preceding argument concerning the authenticity of the mediumistic messages and the true identity of their senders is the startling contrast which exists upon this point between the judgment of savants who are familiar with the question and the current opinion of the ordinary spiritistic circles.

For these latter nothing is more easy or more common than to converse with the departed. It is sufficient for a medium to obtain responses through a table or by means of a pencil, and, setting aside the risk of meeting with deceiving spirits (for there

are dishonest people in the other world as there are here, we are told), there is no reason to doubt that the usual communications proceed from the source from which they purport to proceed. For the specialists of the Society for Psychical Research, on the contrary—even if they are spiritistic in conviction, like Hodgson or Hyslop—nothing is more rare than to find a true medium, and more difficult than to distinguish the authentic from what is not in their messages. For the best mediums constantly mix their dreams and their subliminal reveries with what comes to them from the Beyond, without speaking of perturbations due to the influence of the living; and with the discarnate themselves it seems that there are such difficulties to overcome in order to communicate with us that we can never be sure of the verbal correctness of any of the messages received.

Hodgson compared the communication which he held with the deceased through the channel of the medium (Mrs. Piper) to the conversations which might take place in this world between two persons widely separated from each other who are compelled to exchange their messages by means of two messengers, both of them drunk. [The drunken persons on this analogy would be the medium on this side and the intermediary on the other, both presumably in a trance-like condition.—Tr.] And Mr. Graham, convinced that it is indeed Myers who is revealed in these messages of which I have just spoken, declares,

nevertheless, that to attempt to obtain a reply is equivalent almost to "writing a letter in the darkness and giving it to a messenger who is half asleep to carry across an unknown country bristling with obstacles . . . to an address which is temporary and changing, and carry back replies dictated to an illiterate secretary who does not always understand what he writes."[1] We can see from this, then, that it would be truly marvelous if the correspondence had any resemblance under such conditions. But if this be so in the case of the most powerful medium of our generation, and of a deceased person who had given his life to the solution of this problem and had resolved to do everything possible after his death to manifest himself to us, what ought it to be in ordinary cases? and how completely duped are those mediums, professional and amateurs, who imagine that they are the recipients of communications freely coming from innumerable "spirits" on the other side! I conclude that, even supposing that communication with the discarnate be established, there is almost no chance at the ordinary spiritistic séance to obtain such messages from the spirit world; invariably they issue from the subliminal consciousness of the medium, which elaborates these messages and gives them to us in personalized form. This is why the innumerable groups who sit stealthily around a table only exist on account of their ignorance of the elementary facts of our nature. . . . It is probable that the day will not

[1] W. J. Graham, *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1909, p. 265.

be far distant when meetings of this character will cease to be, or be merged into distinctly scientific groups of experimenters, though doubtless much of the charm and piquant thrill would thereby be removed. . . . But I have already expressed my views on this question in another place (*From India to the Planet Mars*, pp. 423, 424) and I cannot do better than to quote what I then said:

"I fear . . . for mediums and practical spiritists that, when their hypothesis shall have been scientifically demonstrated, the result may be very different from that which they now imagine it to be. It might well happen that the cult of the table, automatic writing, séances, and all other mediumistic practices, may receive their death-blow from the official recognition of spirits by science. Suppose, in fact, that contemporary researches should at last have proved clearly that messages actually come from the discarnate; it has already followed from the same researches that, in the most favorable cases, the veritable messages are very difficult to distinguish from those which are not authentic. When people come to understand that this sorting of messages is almost always beyond their power they will, perhaps, be put out of conceit with experiments in which they have ninety-nine chances against one of being duped, by themselves or others, and in which—a still more vexatious matter—if they should even be so fortunate as to light upon the hundredth chance they would have no certain means of knowing it."

We hardly see people seeking for gold in the sands of the Arve, though there is some there, nevertheless, because "the game is not worth the candle," and no one would care to move so much mud for the sake of seeing a problematical glitter at the end. . . . In like manner . . . it appears to me probable that spiritistic practices will lose more and more their charm in proportion to the extent to which science shows us the rarity of authentic messages, and the impossibility of recognizing them once received. But it is true that to children paste will always produce the same illusion as veritable jewels.

VI

SPIRITS AND MEDIUMS[1]

WHEN, ignorant of the phenomena of automatism, one is introduced to some spiritistic group, and witnesses for the first time the phenomena of table-tipping or automatic writing, one usually experiences a disagreeable feeling of suspicion, the idea that there must be some practical joker present who moves the table without appearing to do so, or that the pretended automatic writer is trying to make fun of us by asserting that he is not responsible for the scribbles of his pen. Soon, however, by the repetition of the séances, complete conviction is gained of the honesty of the participants and of their indubitable sincerity, and—perhaps, also, by reason of personal experience—one arrives at the certainty that there is neither trickery nor deception. And as these phenomena have a certain sense, express ideas, manifest sentiments and intentions, in short, reveal the presence of intelligences and personalities like our own, we are compelled to admit that we have to deal with *minds*—and minds different from any of those present, since

[1] An address delivered at the General Psychological Institute, March 24, 1909.

none of the latter recognize themselves as being the authors of these graphic and unexpected communications, obtained by means of typtology (table-tipping). It was, doubtless, in this manner that the belief in the existence of spirit communications was founded, which was brilliantly represented in Europe scarcely two generations ago by the philosophy and the writings of Allen Kardec, the founder of French spiritism.

One might say that the doctrine of this author—the attribution of mediumistic messages to spirits—is the perfectly logical conclusion from two very simple premises, *viz.*—*First*, that all intelligent phenomena have intelligent causes, and, *second*, that the messages furnished by a medium cannot proceed from the medium himself or other persons present, since neither he nor they have any consciousness of being the authors of them. Curious to remark, Allen Kardec believed it necessary to insist upon the first, as if upon a principle which he thought it his duty to proclaim constantly.[1] . . . The great question for Allen Kardec, as for all spiritists, was, of course, to ascertain who these various spirits were who communicated through his mediums in the circle. For Kardec and his disciples they were spirits of the dead—the discarnate. For the different theological schools, occultists, etc.,

[1] See the epigraph which he placed at the head of his *Revue Spirite*, and which figures there to-day: "All effect has a cause! All intelligent effect has an intelligent cause! The Power of the Intelligent cause is in proportion to the grandeur of the result!"

they were other inhabitants of the Beyond—superior, sometimes inferior, even foreign to our human nature —angels and demons, elementals and elementaries, astral shells and larvæ. But no sect has as yet thought of ephemeral spirits, born at the moment, and neither pre-existing nor surviving the duration of their period of active manifestation. For whence come they? It would be too irrational to have them arise from nothing through a spontaneous creation, soon followed by annihilation; and as for making them issue from the medium himself by means of some psychodynamic process of which he was unknowingly the cause, that would be precisely contrary to the axiom that we cannot be the author of anything if we have no knowledge of being the author.

Unfortunately for the reasoning employed by these spiritists, this supposition—of the simplicity of the self and of its identity with the consciousness which it has of itself—is out of date to-day. Since the time of Allen Kardec the discoveries of positive science have completely disproved this theory, and shown us that the "self," whatever it may be, is composed of a multiplicity of elements instead of being a simple metaphysical monad which Kardec assumed.

Let us recall, briefly, the progress which we have made in half a century in the study of our human nature and its astonishing complexity.

1. First, we have the experiments in hypnotism. These have taught us that a perfectly sane subject placed in a certain special state can, without preserv-

ing any memory when restored to his normal state, play the most varied rôles to perfection and with an ease which one would never have expected of him. At the least suggestion which is made to him he becomes, in turn, a little girl amusing herself with her doll, Napoleon I. giving his orders of battle, a wet-nurse feeding a baby, and a lion ready to spring upon its prey, etc.; all this is too well known to need restatement. Now, no one, so far as I know, even among the most obstinate followers of Allen Kardec, has ever contended that the other world was implied in these phenomena of personification (or objectification of types, as Richet called them), and that this was truly the spirit of Napoleon, of a wet-nurse, of a lion, etc., who returned to inspire the words of the hypnotic subject!

But then if such is the case, how can we be sure that the pretended manifestations and messages from the Beyond which fill the séances are not simply manifestations of the same order—productions of the imagination of the medium, suggestions created by his environment? . . . I do not pretend that the *whole* of spiritism can be accounted for by this theory of imitative responses to suggestion; it may be that spirits can employ this passive state of suggestibility in order to communicate with us. I only say that we should be most cautious and critical in accepting these spiritistic messages and personifications, since we have seen them produced by exterior suggestion or by the stimulation of interior imaginings.

2. Again, the cases of spontaneous phenomena of psychic dissociation, multiple personality, etc., which mental pathology has furnished us of late years, shows us that, in another manner, our personality is liable to split up and assume the appearance of other personalities utilizing the same material organism.

Recollect, for example, the famous case of Miss Beauchamp, so well studied by Dr. Morton Prince.[1] For the civil state and for zoölogy there was only one Miss Beauchamp; but for the psychologist and for practical life there were several different personalities, successively animating or disputing among themselves over the same body! Never did people living under the same roof, I imagine, possess characters and temperaments more different, or present a greater antagonism—bursting forth at times into tragic conflicts—than the members of this singular family, where Doctor Prince pictures for us a veritable saint, a demon almost infernal, and a young girl who is neither the one nor the other—without mentioning other less important personalities. The hypothesis of a number of distinct souls could be sustained to the letter in this case did not two facts indicate that, at basis, there was only one "soul" present, which played all these various rôles. For, on one hand, the psychological analysis of these characters shows us that they were, in a sense, complementary to one another, thus betraying their fundamental unity; and, on the other

[1] *The Dissociation of a Personality*, New York, 1906.

hand, we have the extraordinary history and the psychogenesis of the case, in which one sees the primitive personality of Miss Beauchamp break itself into pieces, so to say, under the action of moral shocks too severe for it, then reunite itself slowly, in the course of some years, by means of the skilful care of Doctor Prince, and end by re-establishing its complete individuality—uniting by psychic synthesis all these various parts, so long dissociated.

As a crystal splits under the blow of a hammer when struck according to certain definite lines of cleavage, in the same way the human personality under the shock of excessive emotions is sometimes broken along the lines of least resistance or the great structural lines of his temperament. A cleavage is produced between the opposite selves—whose harmonious equilibrium would constitute the normal condition—seriousness and gaiety; optimistic tendencies and pessimistic; goodness and egoism; instincts of prudery and lasciviousness; the taste for solitude and the love of nature, and the attractions of civilization, etc. Now, these phenomena of contrast, of psychic polarization, are precisely what strike us so often in mediumistic manifestations when compared with the habitual temperament of the medium. So that these differences, in which the spiritists see a striking proof of an absolute distinction between the spirits and their so-called instruments, awaken, on the contrary, in the mind of the psychologist the irresistible suspicion that these pretended spirits can be noth-

ing but the products of the subconsciousness of the medium himself.

3. Finally, even in the normal state the complexity of the human mind impresses us every day more and more, especially in that obscure region, in the fringe of consciousness, where a mass of confused thoughts always exists—lost memories, vague reveries, desires, cares, regrets, preoccupations, contradictory likings, etc., suppressed by the activities of the moment, but ready to surge upward on the least occasion and manifest themselves, often outside our knowledge, on the slightest relaxation of our attention. . . . How this chaotic medley can engender precise messages, clearly formulated, speaking in the first person, expressing ideas and its own peculiar wishes, manifesting a will and mind of its own (to the point, even, of obstinately contradicting the ideas of the medium or of those present), has always been the stumbling-block to spiritists. Inconceivable as this appears, it is nevertheless a fact, of which I could quote many examples. Let me give one, a typical and instructive case of this type of phenomena.

The Case of M. Til

. . . In 1897, under the influence of his spiritistic friends, M. Til tried automatic writing, and promptly obtained communications. He continued these trials the following days; they caused him great excitement; he became the prey of graphomotor hallucinations, which followed him even at night and made him

write in the air with his finger when he had not a pencil.

The fourth day, on Monday afternoon, having asked some questions relative to the character of his children, he obtained full replies, as well as vague insinuations against his son Edward (employed in the Bureau of Affairs): "Edward must undertake . . . I cannot say more. . . . Edward does not comprehend the end of life. . . . He is too obstinate in his ideas. Ask God to make him judge more sanely the things of earth, for he has need of suppressing his levity. . . . I cannot tell you any more." Finally came the following accusation: "Edward has taken some cigarettes from the box of his employer. The latter has perceived this, and in his resentment has addressed him a letter advising him to replace them very soon. But already he and his friend Bertrand have written in clever fashion a disgraceful reply."

One can imagine with what anguish M. Til gave his lessons in the afternoon, during which he was again exposed to various graphological automatisms, which, among others, ordered him to go quickly to the employer of his son Edward. He ran there as soon as he was free. The chief of the bureau, to whom he addressed himself in the absence of the employer, gave him only good accounts concerning the young man; but the accusative obsession did not consider itself beaten, for, while he listened with attention to these favorable accounts, his finger wrote the phrase, "I am wounded to the core at the duplicity of this man"

—which again aroused all his perplexities. The employer arrived very soon after, and it was only necessary to have his decisive word to reassure the poor father and to bring the "bad spirit" at last to repentance, for it now began to write: "I have deceived you. . . . Michael, forgive me!" At the time, comforted by the recognition of the innocence of his son and perplexed by the mystification of the writing, M. Til resolved to banish this wicked spirit. . . . He had, however, several times to subdue the return of this offensive automatism before he was delivered from it.

At a later date M. Til began to receive communications of a higher moral order—religious and moral reflections, etc. This change was accompanied, as is often the case, by a change in the psychological form of the communications, which came to him thenceforward in auditory messages and articulation—his hand only writing what was dictated to him by this interior voice. But this mediumship appeared to him "less honest," and he mistrusted the source of the messages. . . . But as to the early messages, these seemed to him of foreign origin, and for long he was persuaded that he had been the victim of an evil spirit external to himself.

This case furnishes us a beautiful example of obsession—not to say possession—which automatism can rapidly develop in a subject sane of body and mind who turns his attention for some time to spiritistic practices. But that which particularly

interests us here is the lying communication concerning young Til and his supposed theft. M. Til is astonished that the demon which took pleasure in deceiving him should urge him at the same time, as we have seen, to go without delay and hear the information given about his son. "That was," said he, "a phenomenon which appears very curious. The spirit, after having mystified me, did not leave me for a minute until I had either verified his assertion or ascertained that I had been the victim of his deceit." This desire of the spirit to expose his own falsehood is indeed singular on the spiritistic theory. The whole experience is explained in the most simple manner from the psychological point of view if one considers the two following incidents, which, to my mind, contain the key to the mystery.

1. In what M. Til himself had related to me he had remarked two or three weeks before his experiments in spiritism that his son was smoking many cigarettes, and he had mentioned this to him. The young man excused himself, saying that his comrades of the office did the same thing, following the example of the employer himself, who was a great smoker, and allowed them to use his cigarettes, also, so that nothing would be easier than to help one's self to them. This explanation only succeeded in making M. Til a little uneasy—for he is honesty personified—and he recalls having thought, "I hope my son has not committed that indelicacy!"

2. A second point, which was revealed to me by

chance by Madame Til in the course of conversation, and which her husband later confirmed to me, was that on the Monday in question M. Til met one of his friends on his way to business, and the latter had said to him: "By the way, has your son left the bureau? I heard that M. Dupain was looking for an employee." (He sought, in reality, another assistant.) M. Til, who had heard nothing, was most perplexed, and asked if M. Dupain was discontented with his son, and intended to replace him. On returning home at noontime he told this to his wife, but said nothing about it to his son. It was an hour later that the calumnious message was received.

We perceive now, I think, the nature and the genesis of this "malign spirit," who falsely accused his son, while urging his father to run for information, and the reader will already have mentally reconstructed what took place in the mind of M. Til. The question of his friend that Monday morning subconsciously recalled to him the incident of the cigarettes, constituting the germ of the inquietude which that incident had left in him; and this kindled the fire of his paternal imagination, naturally sensitive concerning the reputation of his son: "Edward, who is incapable of a grave dishonesty, has yet allowed himself to be tempted by the cigarettes of his employer, as I had feared; he was found taking them and threatened with dismissal; who knows but that misfortune, which travels quickly, has not already brought all this about! It is necessary that I should go to his employer quickly," etc.

Such are, I believe, the series of suppositions and inferences, more or less subconscious, which evidently served as the basis of these graphomotor obsessions of M. Til.

There is hardly a father, probably, who would not have reasoned similarly. Only that which in the normal state is presented in the form of memories, thoughts, emotions, etc., being evolved in full light or vaguely felt in the penumbra of the consciousness—always being an integral part of the self—here took an automatic character and the appearance of obsession foreign to M. Til under the influence of his spiritistic preoccupations and in a state of mental perturbation due to the fatigue consequent upon his disturbed night and his practices of mediumistic writing the preceding day. All this proves that what was separated from his personality, in this dissociation of his psychic being, formed an independent antagonistic system, manifesting through the graphomotor mechanism. . .

To sum up, this series of his messages merely expressed the subconscious tendencies and sentiments which agitated M. Til on this occasion. The vague insinuations, the categorical accusation of theft, and the order to go and see the employer, corresponded to his subconscious suspicions, then took form in concrete memory. . . . The obstinacy with which the graphological automatism replied by an accusation of duplicity to the evidence of the chief of the bureau shows clearly the latent thoughts of defiance and incredulity with which we inhibit statements running

counter to our belief. . . . Then, when the employer in person calmed M. Til, the subconscious regret of having given in to these harrowing thoughts without more serious foundation extracted the corresponding sentiment in the form of the excuses of the spirit: "I have deceived you; forgive me!" . . .

The question is: Have we to admit the presence of another deceiving spirit than that of M. Til himself as the author of these phenomena? It seems to me that we do not, but rather that these manifestations are all due to psychic dissociation, owing to extreme auto-suggestibility. This is not to be taken as an explanation, but only as a designation of a special state or condition of the self, which becomes detached, instead of preserving its proper relation to the normal personality. This becomes apparent to him in the form of graphological automatisms.

Finally, in this case of M. Til we see an example of a sort of small romance, subliminally elaborated from memories and perceptions, under the impulse of an emotional condition more or less intense, by means of that curious faculty of dramatization and personification which we see every day in the phenomena of dreams. And this example illustrates, to my mind, the striking truth—too much overlooked in certain quarters—that with perfectly normal persons, in good health (at least, according to all appearances), the simple fact of practising mediumistic writing for two or three days can without their knowledge destroy the psychic equilibrium and engender an automatic

activity in which the products simulate in the most complete manner communications coming from the "other side"; so that they are, in reality, only the results of the subliminal functioning of the subject. The logical consequence is that, even in the case where for want of sufficient information we cannot establish the fact that such messages proceed from the medium, we must nevertheless assume its correctness, unless it be proved to the contrary. And the practical conclusion which flows from this is that it is childlike and imprudent to "dabble in spiritism," in the hope of entering into real communication with discarnate spirits (even supposing it to be an abstract possibility). The only motive which justifies this investigation is disinterested scientific research. For those who practise spiritism the result too often is complete mental dissociation.

You will see by this example that those who give themselves up to spiritistic practices often receive false messages—coming from their own subliminal consciousnesses—which have all the appearance of coming from foreign personalities. As for explaining these phenomena and understanding *how*—by a little mental relaxation on our part—the vague tendencies floating on the margin of consciousness come to be personified separately, to the point even of constituting veritable personalities momentarily possessing an "I," only to lose it a moment later, and be buried again in our subconsciousness—*that* is another problem, the examination of which would

take us too far at the present time. We can, if you wish, say with Prof. William James that "all consciousness tends to personal form." But the fact remains that the psychic elements over which we cease to exercise our immediate control tend, as in a dream, to form an independent personality, an "I," for themselves. Although there may be in the future better explanations of these phenomena, the fact is that we possess within us spirit-imitating functions or processes (*spiritoid*, as Boirac calls them)[1] whose ephemeral products are very difficult to distinguish from the pretended spirits of spiritism.

What contributes still more to the illusion is that, however little one questions their identity, these so-called foreign personalities do not hesitate to conform to the expectations of the medium, and to pass themselves off as the defunct. In the majority of cases these communications cannot be verified. I could quote many cases in which so-called spirits have afterward been found to be living! It is true the spiritists attribute these lying communications to "joking spirits"; but a little more attentive analysis shows, rather—as in the case of M. Til—that no other spirit than the medium himself is present; it is composed of his emotions, his desires or his fears, his reasonings—in short, of elements readily traceable to his own nature—which constitute the contents of these messages, in spite of their personal form, which appear

[1] Boirac, *La Psychologie inconnue*.

to issue from another personality, speaking through him as intermediary.

To sum up, in the course of the last half-century, experiments in hypnotism, the study of spontaneous alterations of personality and the observations of our psychological processes have revealed in the human mind a complexity of nature and possibilities of interior dissociation—of which they were quite ignorant at the time of Allen Kardec, but which have totally ruined the axiom which serves as the principal pillar of his theory. It no longer suffices that an individual should not be conscious of being the author of these manifestations in order to prove that he is in reality the channel of independent spirits. The passive attitude, the abdiction of the will—which the medium adopts in the hope of helping the communications of spirits—tends, quite naturally, to abolish the feeling of initiative, of personal causality, of being a producer of activity, of voluntary control—which normally accompanies the exercise of our thoughts and to a certain point the creations of our imagination. But the loss of this feeling does not in the least hinder the inferior psychic processes from continuing their activity unknown to the subject. From all this the necessity of great prudence before attributing to the discarnate everything which has the appearance of proceeding from them, and the legitimacy of a critical attitude, by the impartial observer of spiritistic phenomena, is obvious. Lack of this is the great defect of those exponents of spiritism who

wish science to occupy itself with their phenomena.

All cases, it is true, are not so simple and transparent as that of M. Til. Mediumistic creations appear often in such contradiction to the natural capacities of the medium that it seems absurd to make them altogether responsible for them without the collaboration of discarnate spirits. And, after all, I do not see any necessity for denying, *a priori*, the *possibility* of spiritistic intervention in the astonishing messages which are sometimes obtained at séances. Only before passing from the possibility of a thing to the affirmation of its reality it is first of all necessary to take account—more than the habitués of these séances generally do—of illusions and complications which might spring from various purely terrestrial sources, of which the principal are, on the one hand, processes of memory and subconscious imagination, and on the other hand the transmission to the medium of information proceeding not at all from the discarnate, but very clearly from living beings within his immediate environment. I recapitulate rapidly these two points:

1. I scarcely need insist upon the large share which latent memory plays in all mediumship. The stock of memories which we have at our disposal is very meager in comparison with the impressions gathered in the course of years, and which slumber in our subconsciousnesses. Have we not seen, under certain circumstances—drunkenness, fevers, cerebral accidents, hyp-

notic states, spontaneous somnambulism, etc.—these memories, long thought dead, revived from the mysterious depths of our being, and not even recognized by the patient or his companions?

You remember the case of the old lady who, seized with delirium in the course of pneumonia, began suddenly to speak an unknown tongue, which, upon inquiry, was found to be Hindustani—which she had neither spoken nor heard since she was brought to England, at the age of four years, two-thirds of a century before![1] Suppose that this person, taking part in a spiritistic séance, had presented the same phenomena in trance, would we not have exclaimed, "A miracle!" and thought it a momentary incarnation in her of some defunct Brahman? Might it not be that all these mediumistic messages are caused by the reproduction of latent thoughts and memories, perhaps heard subconsciously when the attention was otherwise distracted?

A medium can, with the best faith in the world, declare that the contents of a certain message were absolutely unknown to him, and it would appear unlikely, indeed, that he ever had knowledge of it. These negative arguments are by no means certain proof that the messages in question are anything more than impressions received by the eye or the ear of the medium—which he did not ever remember. Nothing

[1] H. Freeborn, "Temporary Reminiscence of a Long Forgotten Language," etc., *Lancet*, June 14, 1902, p. 1685. Reproduced and abridged in *Journal*, S. P. R., October, 1902, p. 279.

is more difficult than to establish a proof that such and such a fact was not at one time or another seen or heard by a medium, and subconsciously reproduced in an access of automatism. The spiritistic public, unfortunately, neglects these elementary truths, and accepts as manifestations from the Beyond what is only the common phenomenon of cryptomnesia.[1]

[1] While this criticism may apply to a certain class of spiritists, it does not apply to the more intelligent nor to the "psychical researchers," who are keenly alive to such possibilities, and who were, as a matter of fact, the very first to point out all such loopholes for normal explanations. But such a theory does not account for those facts—upon which the case really rests—which can be shown never to have been known to the medium (so far, that is, as it is possible to prove a negative), but which appear in her automatic writing or trance utterance, none the less. It is upon this supernormal information that the case rests, and not at all upon those incidents which might be explained by the mere recurrence, in the trance state, of forgotten memories. Professor Flournoy would, of course, be the first to acknowledge this; but it seems needful to point it out in this place, and thus avoid a misunderstanding both of his position and of the intelligent psychical researcher.

Professor Flournoy's theory does not cover either those cases of direct clairvoyance and premonition, for the reality of which there is now a mass of evidence.

As to premonitions, however, Professor Flournoy gives an interesting case in his book entitled *The Prophetic Dream of Mme. Buscarlet*, devoting a whole chapter to it. In brief, the case is as follows:

Mme. Buscarlet dreamed that she was on a country road, with a friend, and saw passing before her a carriage, whence issued a voice, which called the friend. When they approached the carriage they saw within it the form of Mme. Olga Popoi, lying full length, deadly pale, clothed in white, wearing a bonnet adorned with yellow ribbons. She said to Mme. Buscarlet, "I have called you to tell you that Mme. Nitchinof will leave the Institute on the 17th." The carriage then drove on. She wrote this in a letter

Imagination, in its turn, often joins its phantasmagoria to these forgotten memories. . . . Some people have an imagination so strongly developed that they continue to make up stories all their lives; they live in a world of revery, and this is particularly true of young girls and women freed from the ennui and routine of domestic duties, etc. Nothing facilitates mental dissociation so much as these states of relaxed attention—these interior reveries and personal romances, in which one usually plays the chief rôle and where one injures one's self in the enchantment of a half-wakeful dream.

With mediums the imagination frequently becomes a creative power of the first order, vast in quantity, if not good in quality. May I be permitted to recall,

some weeks later to a friend. Mme. Nitchinof died on the 16th, and was carried out of the Institute on the 17th—having died suddenly of an infectious disease. The dream took place six weeks before the death of Mme. Nitchinof. The two women were slightly known to each other; but no letters had of late passed between them, nor had they seen each other for some time. The friend who occupied a place in Mme. Buscarlet's dream was, however, a great friend both of Mme. Nitchinof and of Mme. Buscarlet. Mme. Nitchinof began to feel ill about five weeks after the prophetic dream. Mme. Buscarlet and Mme. Nitchinof had not seen each other for a considerable time before the date of the dream. There was, therefore, no normal connection, apparently, between Mme. Buscarlet and Mme. Nitchinof which might have inspired it. Nevertheless, it was fulfilled almost to the letter. Professor Flournoy does not advance any definite theory; but states that he does not believe that chance will account for the facts, and is evidently inclined to favor the theory of *telepathy à trois*, advanced some years ago by Mr. Andrew Lang in his discussion of the case of Mrs. Piper (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xv, pp. 48–51).—Tr.

à propos of this, the case of Mlle. Smith, who, besides her romances of former existences—in the person of a Hindu princess and of Marie Antoinette—created a Martian language, which, when analyzed more closely, was seen to be only an amusing travesty on French.[1]

The mystery of astronomy—like astrology in former days—is one of the most likely subjects to set on fire the imagination of a medium. Remember the houses on Jupiter, drawn by Sardou when he was a medium, and the recent case observed by Hyslop in America of Mrs. Smead, who also invented a Martian romance, and drew the people and the buildings of the planet Mars, and wrote the language which they speak there —all independently, it appears, of Mlle. Smith.[2] The most striking thing in all these mediumistic imaginings is their childish and puerile character—terribly foolish if one sees in them the work of a person of maturity and seriousness. . . .

This peculiarity is perhaps the most instructive of all which these communications have revealed to us, from the psychological point of view, because of the light which it throws upon their constitution and their mode of formation. In the same way that organic tumors are composed of cells remaining in or returning to an embryonic state—which begin to proliferate unduly—these mediumistic romances seem to be

[1] See *From India to the Planet Mars*, New York, 1900.

[2] See Hyslop, "Preliminary Report on the Trance Phenomena of Mrs. Smead" (*Proceedings*, Amer. S. P. R., vol. i, pp. 525–722). —Tr.

abnormal excrescences on the personality of the medium, which is relapsing into a primitive condition, where it displays the youthfulness and exuberance of vitality which is the property of youth. This display of vitality, which would be normal and suitable in the period of infancy, ceases to be so and easily becomes morbid when it is exhibited later on in life. . . .

2. The second source of complications which I have in mind is *telepathy*, or mental transmission, which furnishes to the medium information which he does not possess, and which the spiritists attribute to the discarnate, even when it takes place between living persons! (I here use the term "telepathy" as a simple designation for the facts, without employing it in any way as an explanatory hypothesis.) Certain it is that telepathy takes away all evidential value from certain communications received which might otherwise be thought to be spiritistic in character. Whether this telepathic transmission from one mind to another takes place in some normal manner (such as unconscious whispering), or by means of brain-waves passing from one brain to another (as in wireless telegraphy), or by means of a purely psychic communication from soul to soul, or by the intermediary of occult agents, etc., that is another question, into which I cannot enter here. I merely follow the example of M. Bourget, who, having given his little traveling clock to Mrs. Piper, to whom he was unknown, and having received from her information as to the origin of this clock and an account of the tragic

death of its former owner, concluded that, as this information did not go beyond what he already knew, he did not believe that he was authorized to see in this the presence of a departed spirit; and he concluded simply that the medium's mind had a method of gaining information as yet unknown to science.

Without doubt, if mediumistic revelations *always* referred to the discarnate, and to none others, we might infer that they were good evidence of spirits, and spiritism would gain in strength proportionately. But there are a number of similar cases where they do not concern either the dead or the dying. Andrew Lang, among others, has published cases in which a person practising crystal-gazing saw appear in the glass ball scenes and localities unknown to her, but which were thought of or known by other persons present in the same room; and he observed several examples of indirect telepathy, or telepathy *à trois*, which show that the conscious thought of one living individual can be transmitted to the subconsciousness of another (which can no longer be doubted) and, by means of this bridge, reach a *third* person, through whom it becomes externalized in visions, table-tippings, automatic writing, etc.

Now, we do not know how far this mysterious realm of telepathy between the living can reach, and what are its limits—if there be any. Spiritists, it is true, have devised a very ingenious explanation of telepathy, by which they introduce spirits in a manner which one would not have dreamed of. It is that

since telepathy between the living has not been explained (any more than universal gravitation), it might take place by means of the instrumentality of spirits, who act like carrier pigeons, as it were, carrying the thought from one mind to another—mystic intermediaries between mind and mind in the incarnate.

One cannot absolutely refute this hypothesis, which, in itself, has nothing impossible about it; but it presents the grave methodological defect of multiplying causes without necessity. For if the intervention of the discarnate be necessary to explain the facts of telepathy between living people, how are we to explain the rapport of the discarnate between themselves, or between them and the living, unless by invoking over again between all these spirits a power of telepathy (either physical, by means of etheric vibrations; or mystical, through the immediate communication of souls), which might more easily be supposed to act directly between the living, without making this superfluous detour through the spirits of the dead? In short, when one explains telepathy by the action of the discarnate one must explain this action itself by a sort of telepathy, and so on *ad infinitum*.

The best means of escaping from this quandary, according to the habit of science, is to formulate empirical laws. We might say that telepathy between the living—particularly between the medium and members of a spiritistic group—is one of these laws, although still vague as to its necessary condi-

tions. The only point which appears to me worthy of being raised, because it is so often observed, is that the ideas of the sitters which have the greatest chance of being transmitted to the medium are those in a sort of nascent or evanescent condition, upon the threshold between consciousness and subconsciousness, and passing from one to the other. Many people going to consult a medium are astonished that the medium tells them nothing that they are thinking about, but reveals to them details of which they did not dream. However, upon closer analysis, it will be found that the facts related have tended to awaken these sleeping memories by association of ideas. In the same way as in chemistry bodies in an unstable condition have a more marked tendency to form new combinations than when in the stable state, in the same way one might say that the psychic processes about to blossom or to fade away in the penumbra of consciousness have more power of radiating to other brains than those which are partly immovable—either in the foreground of attention or in the lowest stratum of the subconsciousness.

But this is not the place to dilate further upon the problems of telepathy. My sole aim in touching upon them is to point out a cause of error too often neglected in spiritistic séances. A medium personifies a dead person whom he has never known in a manner so admirable that it carries conviction to the sitters. They do not dream that perhaps one of them carries with him a group of memories which at the very

moment that they are organized and flashed upward in the form of a composite portrait of the departed is telepathically reflected in the subconsciousness of the medium, as in a living mirror, which immediately translates this image or imprint into words and gestures, portraying without a doubt a certain resemblance, but one in which the defunct has no share.

Combine, now, the facts of mental transmission with the products to which memory and subconscious imagination of the sitters can give birth, and you will understand what unforeseen complications may always be expected in spiritistic séances. So extraordinary do the revelations appear that it is very difficult to exclude the possibility that they are due to a play of action and reaction between the medium and the other persons present (who are often mediumistic themselves, no doubt). A certain amount of skepticism as to the spiritistic nature of these manifestations is certainly pardonable under such circumstances!

But here we come to another great difficulty. "You pretend," it may be said, "that these so-called spiritistic messages can be given without the intervention of real spirits of the departed—by innate psychological processes more or less complicated, but which are inherent in our nature and to which may be added telepathy from the living. . . . But what have you to say of the *physical* phenomena of mediumship—movements of the object without contact, lights, materializations of forms, etc.? Not one of us has yet noticed that he possesses a single trace of supernormal power

of *that* kind—not enough to move a pin the fraction of an inch without the normal aid of our fingers or our breath. If, then, the accounts which are given of such phenomena be true (and how can we doubt it in view of the vast amount of evidence collected by competent authorities?), it is necessary that, in these phenomena at least, we should postulate the intervention of discarnate spirits, or other occult agents of some kind different from the medium himself."

I recognize this objection, and I shall not try to escape it by saying—as is so often done—that no serious man believes this rubbish, or that all pretended mediums producing physical phenomena are charlatans, or that the authenticity of these phenomena has not been scientifically established, or that they are impossible, being contrary to the fundamental conceptions of science, etc. At the same time, I do not pretend to say that I believe all the hair-raising stories which have been given to the public by the spiritists and occultists; but I recall the principle formulated by Laplace, *à propos* of the facts of animal magnetism, held to be incredible by the majority of the savants of this day, but which, under the name of hypnotism, are to-day an integral part of our official science:

"We are so far from knowing all the agencies of nature and their various modes of activity that it would not be philosophical to deny phenomena simply because they are inexplicable in the actual state

of our knowledge, only, we ought to examine them with an attention the more scrupulous as the facts appear to us the more incredible."

I should not be astonished if in the future the phenomena of telekinesis and materialization are as thoroughly established as are those of hypnotic suggestion, in spite of the fact that it is most difficult to admit these phenomena, because we cannot completely explain them. But we no longer treat as impostors, or imbeciles, or hallucinated the savants, always more and more numerous, who have examined these phenomena with the most scrupulous attention, and have been convinced of their reality. It seems to me that we find ourselves in this respect on the verge of a new world of scientific thought. You will have divined that I allude to the marvels of Eusapia Palladino—so well studied for more than twenty years by Charles Richet—and who, though detected in trickery at Cambridge in 1895, has since achieved a brilliant revenge upon her investigators by following them into their own laboratories and defying them to expose her "tricks" or to explain them by known laws of physics. Within the past few years her phenomena have indeed gained wider and wider acceptance. In particular, I mention the exhaustive work of Morselli,[1] professor of psychiatry in the University of Genoa and one of the foremost leaders of Italian science, whose professional studies and philosophical ten-

[1] *Psicologia e Spiritismo*, Turin, 1908 (2 vols.).

dencies hardly predispose him to tolerate any infringements of known biological laws, but who, convinced by the evidence, has written a powerful defense of the phenomena of Eusapia, accepting as genuine even the materialized phantoms! Then, again, Professor Barrett, the Irish physicist, who, after the exposure of Eusapia at Cambridge, suspended the publication of his book, based in part upon the phenomena of Eusapia, for more than twelve years, has published it, thinking that the times have decidedly changed and the pendulum of public opinion swung in her favor.[1] And, again, the Psychical Research Society of London, which —true to its principle that it would never investigate a medium once detected in fraud—suddenly changed this policy, and delegated its most skilful observers to study Eusapia anew (and who, as we know, issued from their examination convinced—even Mr. Carrington, that terrible enemy of fraudulent mediums in America). Again—not to lengthen unduly this list of recent conversions—we have the remarkable report of M. Courtier on the séances of Eusapia at the General Psychological Institute—a report so guarded and so instructive that one can hardly gather the real conclusions of the author, but in which it is stated that many savants of the first rank, while reserving, with academic prudence, their final verdict, witnessed, under excellent conditions of control, phenomena absolutely inexplicable by them.

Let us admit, for the moment, as a working hypoth-

[1] *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought*, London, 1908.

esis (as I think we shall have to some day), the reality of physical mediumistic phenomena, including materializations. This immediately places before us a double problem: that of their material nature and that of the intellectual manifestation of which they are the expression. On one hand, for example, in the presence of an authentic phantom we have to determine whether it has an anatomy, tissues—physiological functions, etc.—resembling ours; then, how it is constituted from the physico-chemical point of view; then, when all that has been determined, to what point this ephemeral creation satisfies the exigencies of our actual mechanics, agrees with the principle of the conservation of energy, etc. On the other hand, we have to scrutinize the character of the mental life, the entire mode of feeling and thought, of this mysterious being, and to determine its possible connection with the mentality of the medium and of the sitters.

Of these two problems, or groups of problems, the first is a problem for physicists and physiologists, and I abandon it to them willingly. The second, which relates to psychology, interests me more, inasmuch as it deals with the question of their initial production, and the origin, in the last analysis, of these mysterious phenomena.

For—since it has been proved that the forces or material substances which constitute materializations proceed from the organism of the medium (whose weight and energy diminish as the body of the phantom grows)—if the mentality of this phantom were

absolutely different from that of the medium and the sitters, that would tend to support the theosophico-spiritistic theory, according to which the physical phenomena are due to entities from "the Beyond," who borrow from the medium the materials necessary for their manifestation. But, on the contrary—even if it were thoroughly established that they did not borrow an atom of matter or energy from the medium, and that they were precipitations or condensations direct from the surrounding atmosphere, ponderable or imponderable—if their psychological individuality could be traced back to the medium, we ought, scientifically, to regard them as creations or metamorphoses of the latter, without any intervention from "the Beyond." In short, whatever may be the ultimate verdict of physics and physiology upon the phenomena of materialization, telekinesis, etc., it remains for psychology, I think, to give the last word on the origin and the genesis of these phenomena. . . .

In order to prove this contention let us select for examination two or three of the most noted historical cases—*viz.*, those of Crookes, Richet, and Morselli.

The Case of Katie King

In default of detailed psychological information in this case, I shall be brief in discussing the phantom of Katie King, which manifested in solid form—composed of flesh and bone—to Sir William Crookes, through his medium, Miss Florence Cook. The apparition was so real that the noted chemist walked

with her arm in arm in his laboratory, photographed her several times, and proved that she differed from the medium in several ways—by a larger waist, a smoother skin, the absence of a scar on the neck, the more regular beating of her heart, more healthy lungs, etc. In short, Crookes contends that the phantom was other than that of the medium from the physiological point of view. "I am absolutely certain, he writes, that Miss Cook and Katie King are too distinct individualities, *at least so far as their bodies are concerned.*"[1] This reserve—in which is revealed the prudence of a true savant—has appeared to me worthy of being emphasized.

Unfortunately, the illustrious observer did not enter into as detailed a comparison of the mentality of the medium and that of the spirit as between their organisms, and it is therefore impossible to give an opinion upon this point. So far as I can judge, however, there is nothing to prevent Katie King from being a product of the creative imagination of Miss Florence Cook. That this young girl, fifteen years of age, honest and sincere as she is represented to us, should have conceived the idea of a spirit guide—as pure and noble a figure as the apparition which is pictured to us by Crookes—is perfectly comprehensible; and as for the biography of this spirit and its romance of adventures (in India, naturally), there is nothing here which does not conform to the usual type of hypnoid creations.

[1] See his *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism.*

It is impossible, it is true, for us to explain the details of this case; first of all, because Crookes does not give them to us; and secondly, because if we knew them our ignorance of the daily life of Miss Cook—of all that she read or heard—would prevent us from reconstructing the suggestions and auto-suggestions from which these details proceeded; but there is no reason for us to see in this figure anything spiritistic.

To sum up: Setting aside the great *physical* mystery of materialization (granting it to be authentic), I see nothing in the psychic personality of Katie King (little as we know of it) which obliges us to see in her an entity from "the Beyond" rather than an externalization of her subconsciousness—a hypnoid elaboration of Florence Cook herself.

The Phantom of the Villa Carmen

This was the materialization observed by Prof. Charles Richet, in Algiers, some years ago, in which the "spirit" of Bien Boa was supposed to have materialized. Writing of his experiences, he says in part:[1]

"This phantom has been produced and repeated in a number of séances which have taken place in the month of April, 1905, in Algeria, in a little pavilion situated in the garden of the 'Villa Carmen,' inhabited by General Noel and his wife. The medium

[1] For details of this case see *The Annals of Psychical Science*, October and November, 1905 (for Richet's Report), and several succeeding numbers.—Tr.

was the daughter of a retired officer—Mlle. Martha B——, aged nineteen years, whose fiancé, the son of M. and Mme. Noel, had died the year before in the Congo. This young person was placed in an angle of the room encircled by curtains. Scarcely had she fallen asleep (in trance) in this cabinet, where the sitters could continually see her through the parting of the curtains, than there appeared before them a sort of Oriental warrior, clothed in white draperies, on his head a helmet, replying to the name of Bien Boa. Sometimes he was seen to issue from the cabinet, sometimes, more curious still, he grew and developed rapidly from a sort of white ball which appeared upon the floor before the curtains, like a person coming up through a trap-door.

"This personality," said M. Richet, "is neither an image reflected by a mirror, nor a doll, nor a manikin. Indeed, it possesses all the attributes of life. I have seen it emerge from the cabinet, walk, go, and come into the room. I have heard the sound of its footsteps, its breathing, and its voice. I have touched its hand on several occasions. This hand was articulated, warm, flexible; I have been enabled through the drapery with which it was covered to feel the wrist, the carpal and the metacarpal bones, which bent under the pressure of my grasp. The phantom also blew through an India-rubber tube into a flask of barite water, which bubbled, proving that the respiration of this phantom produced carbonic acid, exactly like our own." On the other hand, M. Richet con-

siders it certain by reason of his minute examinations of the place, the sitters, etc., that this living being, who disappeared in the same manner that he appeared after a few moments, was neither the medium disguised nor a confederate surreptitiously introduced into the room. Finally, the fact that this being was photographed excludes the idea that this strange visitor was only an hallucination of the persons present.

If such a phenomenon is authentic, it would be interesting to note the revolution which must necessarily follow in our biological ideas. Nature has taken upon our globe some hundred million years to transmute chemical substances into humanity; yet now it requires but twenty years to complete an adult; and *voilà!* by means of a young girl asleep behind a curtain it is possible by reason of a species of parthenogenesis of a nature yet unguessed to produce in two minutes a veritable Arab, of fine stature, with a beard down to his chin, walking, speaking, breathing as ourselves, and, above everything else, born with a helmet on, like Minerva, only much more fully clothed than she! . . . It is true that this fantastic apparition endured but a very short time; it was reabsorbed almost immediately it appeared. However, it reappeared, they say, from séance to séance for several years, and during each of its existences of an hour or so it was so substantial that they took stereoscopic views of it. . . . Had I to give my opinion as to the nature of this phantom, I should certainly feel myself greatly embarrassed. On one hand, considered in

itself, and setting aside the name of the reporter, it does not differ essentially from all those cases of the same character with which spiritistic reviews bristle. I wish to say that the phantom of which we are speaking hardly surpasses the feats of good prestidigitators or the current repertoire of the professional American medium, so clever in reproducing this class of materialization.[1] . . .

But, on the other hand, we have the name of Richet! Now, whoever has had the privilege of knowing this admirable investigator knows well enough his scientific caution, his exceptional perspicacity, and his unrivaled experience at mediumistic séances. It is psychologically very difficult to believe that he allowed any such simple artifice to mystify him; that is why I remain in the attitude of philosophical doubt—denying nothing *a priori* and affirming nothing without sufficient demonstration. For if, logically, "everything is possible," even the creation *ex nihilo* of an Arab, it is also necessary that "the weight of the evidence should be proportioned to the strangeness of the facts"—which is evidently far from being the case in the recital in question.

The author, indeed, affirms that he took all necessary precautions against fraud; but as he does not describe them in detail, doubts involuntarily arise in the mind of the reader. . . . At the same time, the argument

[1] See Mr. Carrington's *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, pp. 230–275, for full details and descriptions of the various methods resorted to by fraudulent mediums in producing this class of phenomena.

drawn from "common sense" does not alone suffice. . . . If it is contended that such phenomena are "impossible" because they are opposed to common sense, it may be replied that the "common sense" of the majority of people tells them that spiritism is the true explanation of these phenomena—which is not at all "common sense" for the savant! . . . And, in view of the present unstable condition of scientific thought, I should certainly hesitate to deny the logical possibility of materialization. . . .

At all events, subsequent proposed explanations, based upon the theory of fraud or illusion, have proved inadequate; and this case may be classified, together with that of Florence Cook and Katie King (studied by Sir William Crookes), as so far unexplained by science.

However, let us turn from the question of the *physical* phenomena of materialization (which, as I have said before, is a question for physicists and physiologists, and I gladly leave it to them) to a consideration of the *mentality* of the phantom—its psychological genesis and content. For the spiritists of the Villa Carmen, Bien Boa (the medium's control) was, of course, an inhabitant of "the Beyond"—a Brahman Hindu, who had died some three hundred years before, and become the spiritual guide of the Noel family.[1] Although he materialized, he said, with the help of the "fluid" supplied by Martha (the daughter), the latter

[1] The medium was, in this case, one of the daughters of General Noel, and the séances took place in their own home.—Tr.

was not indispensable, for several other mediums had already succeeded, in the house of M. Noel, in materializing this same phantom, always with the same intellectual and moral attributes. Spiritists see in this, naturally, a glorious confirmation of their thesis; and truly it seems to prove that Bien Boa is a distinct and permanent entity, who can draw from several mediums the force or fluid for his temporary manifestations. But before adopting this conclusion we ought to know something of the relations and character of the mentality which exist between this spirit and the different members of the group to which he manifested. In the hope of clarifying this problem, I read through the accounts of these séances, published by Mme. Carmencita Noel herself, and I was much amazed at the curious features of resemblance which exist between the physiognomy of Bien Boa and that of Leopold, the guide of Mlle. Smith. As the latter is assuredly only a psychic creation of the medium, and not a separate entity, I cannot but think that he is similar to Bien Boa in his constitution and personality.

Permit me rapidly to sketch the principal analogies which have struck me between these two so-called spirits from the other world: . . .

1. *Their Dependence on the Medium.*—Leopold, who claims to exist independently of Mlle. Smith, his medium by choice, ought to be able to manifest in her absence, through other mediums, and theoretically he affirms he can do so; but practically neither he nor

Mlle. Smith has ever admitted the authenticity of messages supposedly coming from him which other mediums stated that they had received. So that, as a matter of fact, he depends entirely upon her for his manifestation. Bien Boa himself recognized freely his dependence upon Mme. Noel. It was she who was the true medium of the circle, and her physical and mental health influenced in a powerful manner the apparitions of her guide. . . .

A quotation will support this view of the facts:

"Bien Boa," said Mme. Noel, "has always declared, either by the table or by writing, and later by his own mouth, when materialized—that the true medium at these séances was not Vincentia Garcia (a former medium), but myself, the president's wife. . . . He did not cease to repeat to me: 'All depends on you; for you are the pivot upon which all turns. Without you I can do nothing; no black thoughts, no sadness, be sparing of yourself, rest well, do not tire yourself, your gaiety is necessary to me.' Also, contrary to the usual custom, he obliged me always to magnetize the medium at least a half-hour in the cabinet at the beginning of the séances, in order to pass into her my 'fluid.' . . ."

On January 22, 1902, Bien Boa appeared quite recognizable as to his figure and his clothing, but, unfortunately, veiled—a fact which was due, without doubt, to an indisposition of Mme. Noel. The "guide"

always reminded Mme. Noel of the importance of her health upon the results.[1]

2. *Their Rapport with the Medium.*—If we analyze the spiritual ties, the emotional sympathy, which unite Bien Boa to the medium we find them identical to those which exist between Leopold and Mlle. Smith. Like Leopold, Bien Boa is a guide of the highest moral elevation; a consoler, a supporter, a practical counselor, and, above all, an adorer very much in love with his protégé—he surrounds her with constant care, covers her with kisses, and lavishes upon her declarations of the most ardent character. So far as these pathognomonic characteristics are found, they resemble the numerous psycho-sexual creations of which so many cases are known at the present day. This interpretation of the psychological character of Bien Boa is further corroborated by the manner in which this amorous mentor came into being.[2]

3. *Their Psychogenesis.*—We see by the above quotation that Bien Boa's origin was due to an antagonism or psychic conflict in the course of spiritistic séances held in a mixed environment, the evident result of a sort of cleavage between the dispositions or

[1] See *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, Année 1902–03, pp. 341, 342, 594–97.

[2] Bien Boa "never loses the occasion of preaching to us an elevated moral sermon, insisting especially upon union, harmony, concord, and purity of morals." . . . Speaking for himself, the guide said: "I have come here for my Carmencita; I love her, I love her! Carmencita, I love you, I love you, I love you! . . . My Carmencita, well beloved, I adore you!" (*Revue du Spiritisme*, 1902–03, pp. 415, 594; 1903–04, p. 156, etc.)

tendencies of a lower order and the better nature of the medium revolting against these grosser influences. . . . Both are manifestly the reactions of a feminine defense, a personification of sentiments of bashfulness, moral and physical, provoked by the manifestation of a male character through a female organism.

It was in a small town in the provinces, where General Noel was commanding the garrison, that these séances commenced—the circle being composed of General Noel and his wife, and three officers of the army. Now, without in any way slandering the army, it may be said with safety that the subconscious thoughts of these officers were not precisely the same as those of a young woman of high ideals! And, in the same way that two opposing electricities, existing in a neutral state in the soil, separate themselves suddenly upon the approach of a storm-cloud, one can believe that the introduction of these officers produced in the psychic atmosphere of the séance a polarization of currents which became personified and condensed into two separate characteristic personifications as opposed and contradictory as the demon and the saint in the case of Miss Beauchamp, which hardly leaves us any doubt as to their genesis through mental dissociation. One can also judge of it from the following report of Mme. Noel herself, which is admirably clear in this respect:

"One fine evening we took it into our heads to turn tables. After a short time the table began to move, and we learned that two entities were present. The

first was, so he said, the old master of the house, Commander Brauhauban, an artillery officer, dead for some twelve years. The other announced himself as the guide and personal control of Mme. Noel. He was an Indian Brahman. He told us later that he had been dead for some three hundred years. These two entities have never left us; *they represented for us two opposing characters*—Ormuz and Ahriman. Their personalities are totally different. While one (the Brahman) is noble, reserved, correct, a mentor of the highest morality, the other (the officer) showed himself to be what he was in life—abrupt, a tease, original, a practical joker of somewhat bad taste, especially as regards women!"[1]

One can hardly imagine or better describe the phenomenon of contrast through dissociation which was produced at these mixed séances at the home of M. Noel, and which immediately took on the appearance of two separate spirit entities, in accordance with the well-known tendency of mediumistic automatisms to simulate deceased persons.

With the later changes of residence and environment of Mme. Noel, the military commander appeared to cease his manifestations, while her guide, Bien Boa, once created—keenly alive to her intimate aspirations and rooted in the deepest fibers of her nature (like Leopold to Mlle. Smith)—remained henceforth attached to her.

The Final Elaboration of their Romance.—It was

[1] *Revue du Spiritisme*, 1902–03, p. 269.

only from a certain moment when, after many varied incidents and suggestions (in which an engraving in a book of Alexandre Dumas appears to have played a peculiar rôle), that Leopold confessed himself to be really the discarnate spirit of Cagliostro, and to have adored Mlle. Smith, in a former existence, when she was Marie Antoinette. Similarly with the guide of Mme. Noel (who materialized himself dressed like the figure seen in a well-known engraving). It was not until much later that we learned that under the pseudonym of "Bien Boa" was hidden a Brahman of quite another name, who had had a curious romance with Mme. Noel in a former existence![1]

We might push these analogies further between the two guides in question, and show, for example, that the figures which came later on and added to the manifestations of Bien Boa (his sister Bergoglia, etc.) are the equivalent of other personalities — in the somnambulistic romance of Mlle. Smith—Astane, etc. But the points which I have raised suffice, I think, to justify my theory that (with the exception of the power of materializing which Bien Boa possessed, and of which Leopold had not given the slightest indication), there is a great similitude between these

[1] When Bien Boa materialized, the head-dress was that of a Hindu spirit, represented in the famous engraving of Tissot. The costume also slightly resembled it. The entity (Bergoglia) told a veritable romance of the most curious order, explaining the ties which, according to her, attached Mme. Noel to Bien Boa. "This name," continued she, "is not his; it is an assumed name under which he has made himself known to you" (*Revue du Spiritisme*, 1902–03, p. 346, and 1904–05, p. 538).

two so-called discarnate spirits. I therefore conclude, until proof be adduced to the contrary, that the phantom of the Villa Carmen, from the psychological point of view, was assuredly only an imaginative elaboration of Mme. Noel—a product of her creative fancy, a sort of hypnoid ramification of or excrescence upon her own individuality.

The Materializations of Eusapia

We must pass rapidly over this subject, which has been excellently treated by Morselli. It is necessary to distinguish in the Palladino phenomena between those which depend upon John King and the cases, far rarer, where apparitions have been seen of other recognizable persons—for example, the dead mother of Morselli himself. These latter are indeed difficult to explain by the imagination of Eusapia alone, who had probably never known of the existence of these dead people. But when we remember the possibilities of mental transmission from the sitters to the medium, the fact becomes intelligible without having recourse to the discarnate. It is clear, however, that this does not *necessarily* exclude them. Certainly one could discuss this point forever; and if it be not the "dead returned," it would be amusing to find Lombroso getting angry and proving that it really was Mme. Morselli who was manifesting to her son when Morselli himself did not believe it, and declared that the apparition simply reflected, by means of the plastic intermediary of Eusapia, the

memories which he had preserved of the departed! The critical reader is here obliged to hold to the methodological principle of economy; we are not scientifically authorized to find in "the Beyond" the origin of facts which are perfectly explicable by conscious or subconscious processes in the living.

As for "John King," a *soi-disant* English buccaneer of three centuries ago, Morselli retraces the history of his pretended manifestations, through diverse mediums, for fifty years, and shows clearly, it seems to me, how all these personifications carry the impress, often puerile, of imaginations stimulated by the environment. In order to establish that "John King" is really a being in himself, and distinct from the mediums through whom he pretended to reveal himself, it would be necessary to have other proofs than those which have been offered to us in the past.

Thus, when one analyzes, from the psychological point of view, these three cases of materialization—which are the most celebrated, and which present the best evidence of scientific guarantee—they speak less in favor of a real intervention of the discarnate than the action of certain psychodynamic processes, accompanying hypnoid formations, or sub-personalities, which form a part of the medium himself. The *objective* phenomena of materialization exceed, it is true, all our received ideas of physiology, and force us to accept hypotheses entirely new; but even here, if one wishes to remain faithful to the principles of experimental science, in considering the explanation

of such obscure and extraordinary facts, we should begin by appealing only to forces and faculties yet unknown, instead of referring them to "spirits" or to other purely hypothetical agencies in order to explain the phenomena.

As you will see, the facts of mediumship (either mental or physical) have not furnished me with any certain proof of the intervention of the discarnate. They have always appeared to me explicable by ordinary psychological processes within ourselves—often complicated on one hand by the embellishments of memory and subconscious imagination, and on the other by telepathy from the living. Then, in certain cases (and even here very rarely), we have the employment of powers of telekinesis and materialization, which are occasionally seen, but as to the necessary conditions for which we know almost nothing.

Do I therefore consider spiritism condemned forever? Such a conclusion on my part would be little short of grotesque, for, first of all, not being infallible, I may be deceived in my interpretation of the facts which I have tried to interpret; and, also, these facts constitute only an infinitesimal portion of those to be found in the literature on the subject which we have not examined, especially those numerous facts which are constantly being observed, but which, for some reason or other, are never seriously investigated.

Finally, without asserting that the spiritistic hypothesis is absurd or anti-scientific at basis, we should certainly demonstrate its reality before we accept it.

And I must again assert emphatically that I have never yet come across a case which has appeared to me to satisfy all the exigencies of the scientific method. It seems to me that before we can appeal to the intervention of new causes in the psychical and physical phenomena of our world—of causes such as the influence of the discarnate, we must first of all attribute to normal causes all that we possibly can—*viz.*, to the incarnate. Unfortunately, the discoveries of the last half-century give rise to the thought that we have still much to learn of our own natures. And nothing warrants us in thinking that the "residue," which Allen Kardec attributed to the agency of discarnate spirits, and which we have already so reduced, will not further be reduced some day by the progress of science until almost nothing remains.

In my opinion, therefore, spiritism has not been scientifically demonstrated—but perhaps it will be to-morrow! . . . I mention here two classes of phenomena which may some day prove spiritism to be true. They are, *first*, phenomena (which might be called "elective synthesis") which the mediumship of Mrs. Piper has furnished. A large number of cultivated people, even our best savants, have emerged from these séances convinced that they have communicated, through her entranced organism, with spirits of the dead, whom they had intimately known on earth. Doubtless many of these striking cases can be explained by mental transmission—the medium having only reflected to the sitter the image of the discar-

nate which he himself carried in his thoughts. But there are more complex facts, in which it is necessary to admit an active and selective telepathy, by the aid of which the hypnoid imagination of Mrs. Piper can choose from the minds of the living — present or absent—memories concerning only the dead person in question, and reunite them in such a way as to reconstruct a completer image than any of the partial images which were left in any of the various persons of his acquaintance. Now, how explain this power of choice, of exact synthesis, which the medium (who did not know the deceased) is enabled to exercise, if this is not through the intervention of the latter, who directs and co-ordinates this world of ideal reconstruction, or who, more simply, manifests in person through the medium?

Let us suppose that the incomplete memory of the defunct which one of the sitters possesses is transmitted telepathically to Mrs. Piper, and that she, by attracting to her, by some obscure psychological process, other fragmentary memories possessed by other persons, welds these all together into a complete whole—a sort of mosaic composed of numerous fragments. Have we not seen that the same individual impresses various members of his family in different ways, though there is a sort of analogy and emotional background common to all these, forming a sort of principle of attraction or psychic bond by means of which it might be possible to select from their minds these memories, and that they might become fused

and blended in the subliminal consciousness of the medium, having been selected, by reason of this hypothetical mark of distinction?

"Like attracts like." If this proverb be true of the memories of the defunct, preserved by the living and transmitted to the subconsciousness of Mrs. Piper, we could understand that these memories, being selected and classified by her, might give place to reconstructions of so exact and recognizable a nature that even the persons whom they represented might actually be astonished by them![1]

[1] It should be stated, in this connection, that several competent psychical researchers have examined this hypothesis in great detail, and have rejected it. The theory, doubtless, is a fascinating one—one which I myself was inclined to accept some years ago, and, in fact, actually wrote in its defense. (See *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xvii, pp. 337–59.) I should no longer defend this theory, though I am not yet convinced of the correctness of the spiritistic view, especially as at present held. Doctor Hodgson and other critics have, however, examined this "selective telepathy" idea, and rejected it after a careful study of the facts. The best counter argument is, however, in my estimation, that of Doctor Hyslop, which I summarize very briefly. It is contained in his first report on Mrs. Piper (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xvi). Against the "telepathic hypothesis" are urged the following considerations:

1. *The necessary selectiveness of the process* (for which we have no analogy whatever, even in wireless telegraphy, and the odd fact that only our memories of the *dead* are tapped).

2. *The magnitude of its application to all living consciousness and memory.* (Outside these phenomena there is no scientific evidence whatever that such a form of telepathy exists; experiments give no proof of its existence.)

3. *Inconsistency of its mistakes and confusion with the assumption of its easy access to all living memories.* (If this omniscient telepathy were a fact, how account for the constant mistakes and confusions which should not occur on such a theory, but which do occur, as a matter of fact, and which are just the mistakes we

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I do not know whether such a hypothesis squares with the facts better or worse than the spiritistic; they are so complicated and involved that it is very difficult to estimate them fairly in a lecture. But it is certainly disconcerting that Prof. William James, who discovered and studied Mrs. Piper for more than

should expect on the spiritistic hypothesis—*i. e.*, supposing the person were actually "there.")

4. *Differences in the clearness of communicators.* (These differences do not seem to depend at all upon the mental state and memories of the sitter—which should be the case if the telepathic hypothesis were true—but solely upon the communicator. Some are always "good communicators"; others always "bad"—no matter *who* the sitter may be.)

5. *Inconsistency of the communications and change of communicators.* (On the telepathic hypothesis there is no reason for the constant change of communicators; the apparent difficulties from which they suffer in communicating, etc. On the spiritistic hypothesis this is all quite natural.)

6. *Inconsistency in its assumptions.* (In order to make the telepathic hypothesis "work," we must assume certain difficulties in the process to account for the observed facts. Yet the ease and flow of the communications do not at all agree with this view of the case.)

7. *Variations of the point de repère.* (The theory of selective choosing of facts by the medium's subliminal consciousness because of their "color-tone" or "label of familiarity" is completely wrecked by the theory of intermediaries—an amanuensis on "the other side" who, it is said, does the writing, etc.)

8. *Reproduction of what would be expected on the spiritistic theory.* (If selective telepathy be true, why does it not obtain for us many facts besides those given? Yet only those are given which we should expect on the spiritistic hypothesis.)

9. *Necessity of combining various other processes and assumptions with telepathy.* (This is unwarranted and unsupported by the facts.)

Other objections might easily be given, but the above will suffice to show that the spiritistic hypothesis has something to say for itself, though it may not ultimately prove to be true.—Tr.

twenty years, and who was one of those most thoroughly familiar with her phenomena, should declare that he "awaits new facts, clearer and more precise," before he is able to say with certainty whether these messages truly emanate from the discarnate or whether they are the subliminal creations of the medium which we see in the trances of this remarkable woman!

The *second* class of phenomena which seems to promise much for the spiritistic hypothesis is that of "cross-correspondences."

Suppose, *e. g.*, that three mediums, on three different continents, furnish simultaneously communications, giving (without other explanation and without the spectators understanding why) one *Monday* and *Wednesday*, another *Sunday* and *Thursday*, the third *Friday* and *Saturday*, and that through a fourth medium, quite separate from the first three, we should receive the following communication: "*Tuesday* completes the series; I have done that in order to prove my independence of the instruments which I employ" —it would, we must confess, be difficult to resist the conviction that behind these four individuals doing the writing there is a fifth individual whose thoughts have conceived and put into execution this ingenious means of proving to us its separate and distinct reality. This would be still more striking if, instead of an idea as elementary as the days of the week, we suppose a poem, an episode in history, a philosophical idea,

which is the key to the enigma, and which appears suddenly by the juxtaposition of fragmentary messages or unintelligible allusions, so long as they remained isolated. Ah, well! It may be that the discarnate have recently devised this curious procedure in order to convince us finally of their existence. Indeed, the members of the Society for Psychical Research have already gathered quite a collection of these "cross-correspondences," obtained almost at the same moment through the automatic writing of excellent mediums—Mrs. Holland, in India; Mrs. Forbes and Mrs. Verrall, in different towns in England; Mrs. Piper, in America, etc.; and, according to the script of the latter, which contains usually the solution of the mystery, it is none other than the spirit of Myers himself who invented and put into execution this admirable method.[1]

Unfortunately (why is it that critical reflection always discovers flaws in the most perfect demonstrations?), the fifty or sixty cases of cross-correspondence published up to the present are far from having the accuracy and precision of the example which I have given above; and the revelations of the so-called Myers through the various mediums are so

[1] The question of "Cross-correspondences" has been the subject of many important papers in the *Proceedings* of the S. P. R. (see especially the Reports of Mrs. Verrall, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xx, pp. 205–75; Miss Johnson, vol. xxi, pp. 219–391; Mr. Piddington, vol. xxii, pp. 19–416; Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, vol. xxiv, pp. 170–200; Miss Johnson, *id.*, pp. 201–63; Doctor Hyslop, *Proceedings*, Amer. S. P. R., vol. iv, pp. 338–776, *passim*, etc.).—Tr.

nebulous or so imperfectly concordant that a doubt exists as to the whole mass of facts. And then, even granting the reality of the cross-correspondences, might not this "fifth intelligence" be a creation of one of the four mediums, which, by means of telepathy at great distances, influenced the minds of the other three in order to ridicule our efforts in the pursuit of the discarnate? Let us wish that Myers or the other spirits—if they really come into play at all in all this—will soon reveal to us a means of eliminating from mediumistic manifestations the combined action of the subliminal imagination, of which we have too often proved the maliciousness, and of telepathy from the living, of the limits of which nothing is yet known. While awaiting this let us leave the door open to the possibilities of the future.

CONCLUSION

I have carefully abstained in this lecture from touching upon philosophical, moral, religious, and even social questions, which are so often mingled with the question of mediumship. . . . But, speaking here under the auspices of the General Psychological Institute, it seems to me that I should remain, as it does, upon purely scientific ground.

I also think that it is an error to identify spiritism and spiritualism (as is so often done in England and America). . . . For, even were the discarnate and their manifestations universally recognized as empirical realities, materialistic monism would assuredly

be enabled to interpret them, after its fashion, as ephemeral and fortuitous combinations of ponderable or imponderable matter, actuated by the consciousness of other living beings. The question of the verity or the falsehood of spiritism is not, in my opinion, of essential importance in making a deliberate choice between the various attitudes which may be adopted in viewing the mysteries of the Universe and of Life.

VII

THE CASE OF EUSAPIA PALLADINO

THROUGH the courtesy of my learned colleagues —Professor Richet, of Paris, and Doctor von Schrenck-Notzing, of Munich—I had the opportunity of seeing Eusapia Palladino at two séances (December, 1898, and February, 1903). The Palladino phenomena, which for twenty years have defied all explanations by orthodox science, are to-day so well known and have given birth to so much literature that it would be superfluous to relate in detail the séances which I attended, inasmuch as they are not among the most brilliant, not presenting any visible materializations. I will limit my remarks to those incidents which at one of the séances impressed me the most—a séance which in certain respects is historic—I speak of the séance of December 1, 1898, in Professor Richet's library, which was arranged for the purpose of assisting Eusapia to regain her reputation, and again to reinstate herself after her lamentable failure in England three years before. Myers, as is well known, had assisted, in 1894, at the séances held on the Île Roubaud, at the house of M. Richet, and had become convinced of the authenticity of the

EUSAPIA PALLADINO

(Seated at the séance-table in the room where most of the New York sittings were held.)

phenomena. But when, the following summer (1895), he invited her to his home in England in order to study her, in conjunction with his English colleagues, fate willed that the poor woman, led into temptation by the very conditions permitted, allowed herself to trick —that is to say, being insufficiently controlled, and assisted by darkness, she found means to liberate one of her hands, and with it to move objects within her reach or pinch her neighbors. This trick had already been discovered and exposed by Richet, and it was easy to detect her, or at least to prevent her from doing so at the moment when she attempted it. But the Cambridge experimenters, unfamiliar with her methods and phenomena, encouraged fraud instead of hindering it;[1] then, faithful to the principles of the Society for Psychical Research (which disqualifies all those mediums who have been caught in trickery), they discontinued their experiments with Eusapia, and she had to return to the Continent with the bitter feeling of having been unmasked like a common charlatan. This result naturally caused Myers to doubt the validity of his former experiments, which he was no longer certain had not been vitiated by the artifices in question.

[1] Especially Hodgson, who had not assisted at séances with Eusapia on the Continent, and who was very unfavorably disposed toward physical mediums by reason of his past experience. We must remember that it was he who, when sent to India to inquire into the pretended prodigies of Mme. Blavatsky, succeeded in completely exposing the fraud which this celebrated exponent of theosophy had attempted to found her doctrine upon. (See *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. iii, pp. 201–400, and vol. ix, pp. 129–59.)

For three years things remained in this condition, until Richet, thoroughly convinced of the authenticity of the phenomena by fresh observations, repeated, with all possible precautions, his experiments, and asked Myers to attend a new séance, which, it was hoped, would be decisive in one way or another. It was so, in fact, and in favor of the reality of the phenomena. Eusapia assured the sitters that it was her intention this time to produce phenomena under unimpeachable conditions, and herself suggested all the precautions one could wish: *First*, contrary to her liking (or rather that of her trance personality, "John King"), this séance took place in a good light throughout, permitting one to follow all the movements of the medium by sight. *Second*, in addition to the visual control, Eusapia permitted throughout the séance a tactile control. It was not she who held the hands of her neighbors or placed her feet against theirs, according to the custom she preferred (which would naturally facilitate the liberation of one of her limbs); it was they who, in turn, held her wrists and ankles. For my own part, I held her left wrist, surrounding it with my thumb and middle finger, like a ring, at the same time seeing with my eyes that I had a direct and immediate contact which could not be rivaled by any method of indirect control, such as tying with string, etc. *Third*, before each experience she took care to tell us what she was going to do, in order that it might not surprise us, and that each one could establish the phenomenon to the best of his

faculties and observation. Evidently fearful that Myers could not control her satisfactorily—as at the séances at Cambridge—and would afterward think that the control had been insufficient at the moment of the production of any phenomenon, that no one knew what had just passed, that the facts remained doubtful, etc., she did not cease to admonish him to pay the closest attention, to observe carefully the condition of affairs, and afterward to remember exactly what had happened.

Under these conditions I saw phenomena which I then believed, and still believe, to be certainly inexplicable by any known laws of physics or physiology. The large and heavy curtains of the window, to which Eusapia turned her back, and from which the back of her chair was separated by a distance wide enough to permit one to pass through, were, after several trials, blown out by a violent wind, parting them from their upper support, and settled down over the head of the medium as if they were suddenly blown out by a violent gust of wind coming from behind. This was after several trials, at the moment when the medium violently contracted all her (well-controlled) muscles. The lower part of one of the curtains was suddenly lifted up and carried over the table, where it covered the arms of the medium and that of the controller who was holding her. The zither, which we ourselves had placed on the ground, in the embrasure of the window, out of the reach of the medium, began to sound, and gave forth the same note eleven suc-

cessive times; then we heard it move and jump, by jerky bounds, over the floor. Finally it was flung, as if by an invisible hand, upon the table, where it remained upside down—*i. e.*, strings downward. In this position, under our eyes, and without being touched by any one—the medium making movements in the air above it at a distance of fifty centimeters, with her hand held by the controller—the zither resounded ten or twelve times synchronously with her movements. Several times I felt myself touched, as did the others present; I was struck, my arm squeezed, as though by a large hand, which gave an invisible pinch, etc. All this was when the limbs of the medium were well in sight, and held in such positions that they could not reach me.

Myers was this time—as were all the others—absolutely convinced of the reality of the phenomena, since the evidence left nothing to be desired. He was still further convinced, to the point of certainty, by a second séance, which we held two days later (December 3, 1898).[1]

During this séance "John King," speaking with Richet during an interval in the phenomena, acknowledged that Eusapia had indeed tricked in the séances at Cambridge Myers returned to England having no longer any doubt as to the reality of the supernormal

[1] M. Boirac, rector of the Academy at Dijon, who had only been able to attend the first séance, has published a detailed account of it, as well as the one following ours (December 5, 1898), also held at M. Richet's house, but which Myers did not attend.

nature of the facts, and he made his declaration public at the general meeting of the Society for Psychical Research which took place a little later (December 8, 1898).[1]

I do not believe that, in the case of Eusapia, any number of detailed records, fortified by any number of instantaneous photographs, can convince any one who has not himself been present at a séance with this medium. As a matter of conscience, however, I feel it my duty to report, without giving uselessly minute details, some of the facts which appeared to me the most conclusive, and which have left me with a feeling of certainty which cannot be effaced. As to the Palladino phenomena, which I have not personally seen—the movement or breaking of large pieces of furniture at a distance, levitations or changes of weight of the medium, materialized apparitions of hands or figures or faces, etc.—I naturally have the right to say, "I will only believe when I have seen them"; or, as so many people say, "I would not believe even if I should see them!" But am I justified in thus criticizing in too offhand a manner the evidence furnished by other savants, who may be superior in perspicacity to myself? Without doubt, had I assisted at the same séances, I, too, should have perceived the same phenomena as they; if they were deceived, I also should have been deceived. I have no difficulty, therefore, in admitting, by courtesy, all

[1] *Journal*, S. P. R., vol. ix, pp. 4, 35.

that the other observers have testified to and seriously reported upon.

NORMAL HYPOTHESES

The abundant and fantastic records which the savants publish each year on the exploits of Eusapia are, from the point of view of traditional science, an extraordinary enigma, for the reason that all normal suppositions which one could make regarding them encounter difficulties equally great. The hypotheses appear to me to be divisible into the five following: Confederacy or collusion, chance, fraud, hallucination, and a combination of all of these. Let us examine them rapidly.

1. *Confederacy.*—Let us suppose that there is a vast organized conspiracy composed of the witnesses of the Palladino phenomena. In reality Messrs. Luciani, Morselli, Bottazzi, and many more—to speak only of Italians—are not alone concerned, but also Richet, Ochorowicz, and so many others on the northern side of the Alps. These men must all be in a vast conspiracy to mystify their readers and teach their obdurate colleagues what to say in turn! Except for the fact that such a vast organization as this has never had its traitors, this hypothesis would please me very well. But I forget that I myself am part of this conspiracy, and that I have already said too much!

2. *Chance.*—It happens that a curtain suddenly bulges out, because a mouse gets into its folds; that a table splits suddenly on account of the humidity or

the dryness of the atmosphere; that a guitar sounds on account of the rupture of a cord, etc. . . . Chance accomplishes much, but in actual life when it coincides too often it takes the name of "natural law," and becomes the object of our science. And the question is, whether the curious incidents which fill the séances of Eusapia are not already sufficiently numerous and regular to merit the name of scientific realities.

3. *Fraud.*—Consciously or not, Eusapia will produce her phenomena by trickery. . . . Her partisans themselves do not deny that when one allows her to get free she employs simple fraud, such as the substitution of a hand or a foot, etc. The difficulty is in proving that she does not *always* do this. Professional prestidigitators do many marvelous things. . . . Professional scientific men, shut up in their laboratories and dealing with nature only, which does not lie to them, might make but poor witnesses of such tricks. . . .

The hypothesis of fraud—or, if you will, of the imbecility of the observers who are unable to discover it—is very attractive, and the one which will be generally believed, though it, too, has its difficulties! In the first place, it attributes to the savants a stupidity which is surely a trifle exaggerated. Also, the Eusapian séances and those of conjurors differ in one fundamental point: it is that the latter work with objects which they have been able to prepare in advance, while this is not the case with Eusapia, who

operates in any room whatever—even in the physiological laboratory of a university; and, indeed, there is not a conjuror living who could produce the same manifestations under the same conditions of control. Finally, not only has no one so far discovered the actual *modus operandi*, but no one has even given us the least comprehensive explanation as to its nature and method of production. I do not speak of those simple methods of trickery which have often been detected, but of those puzzling phenomena which occur in her good séances, and which have never yet been satisfactorily explained by any one, or shown to be fraudulent. Against them rests simply the general presumption of fraud, of a nature still unknown. Of course this theory can never be refuted, but it should be supported by facts, which it is not.[1]

But it is clear that as the years go by her séances become more and more mystifying. For ten years I hoped her methods of trickery might be discovered—the secret of this mystery—but this hope is now shattered, and is at present so small that I cannot believe that it will ever be fulfilled.

4. *Hallucination.*—It must be remembered that we are not here concerned with sporadic hallucinations—the effects of fatigue and semi-darkness—which would vary with each individual, but with coincidental and persistent hallucination of all the spectators. It is necessary to postulate an hallucination, at once cohe-

[1] I have repeatedly pointed this out in my writings on Eusapia.—TR.

rent, continuous, and collective, inducted by Eusapia in all her spectators. Certainly this hypothesis must not be lost sight of.[1] Podmore advanced the idea that the power of hallucinating the sitters is part of the stock in trade of all good mediums; and this hypothesis has been reinvented, developed, and applied in detail to some of the Palladino phenomena by one of my friends, M. Tommasina, a well-known physician, noted for his work in radioactivity and his kinetic theory of gravitation. M. Tommasina is especially attracted to this hypothesis—the power of fascination which Eusapia supposedly employs—to explain those phenomena which were produced in the spring of 1906 in the physiological laboratory of the University of Turin, and which had for their witnesses, among others, Dr. P. Foá, professor of pathological anatomy, and the three assistants of the illustrious physiologist Mosso—Doctors C. Foá, Herlitzka, and Aggazzotti.[2] (To cite only one example of the inexplicable phenomena which these savants claim to have proved, a heavy table, which no one was touching, was broken in pieces, the nails torn out, and the wood broken, under the eyes of all the sitters and in good conditions of light, while Eusapia was watched and held by three controllers.)

[1] See Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii, pp. 76, 159, 238, 244–69, etc.; Count Petrovo-Solovovo, *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxi, pp. 436–515; H. Carrington, *Journal*, American S. P. R., December, 1909, pp. 711–27.

[2] For an account of these séances, which created a profound sensation throughout Europe, see *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*, pp. 100–08.

"In the experiences of Turin," says M. Tommasina, "as in those of Paris and Genoa, Eusapia deceived every one by a very simple means. She said to the physiologists who surrounded her: 'You believe that I delude you by tricks; place the instruments in such a position that I cannot move them; hold my hands in yours, place your feet against mine—I shall be your prisoner; but,' added she, inwardly, 'it is you who will be at my mercy'; and that is what took place. But even if one can hypnotize a person without contact simply by looking at him, every one knows that it is most difficult to do this to several subjects at once, especially psychologists capable of recognizing the slightest attempt of the kind. It follows, then, that Eusapia must have direct contact with those whom she wishes to influence by suggestion, and she obtains it, obliging them to control her themselves. That is to say, she thereby disarms them from all suspicion of trickery, which is a very clever stroke on her part.

"Let us see how she effects it in the case of the breaking of a table at a distance, which has appeared to be one of the most inexplicable of the phenomena witnessed by the assistants of Professor Mosso. From their description, even, it appears that those not in direct contact with Eusapia were obliged, at her request, to make a chain of hands with those who touched her, and the doctor upon whom she had thrown her spell, in order to accomplish the operation, was invited at the desired moment to touch her

shoulder, or to seize one of her hands, which were already held by the other controllers. It will be observed, also, that Eusapia, before proceeding to more difficult tests, regularly produced less important phenomena, which served to facilitate the progressive power of her influence upon all the assistants, until the moment arrived when she could strike the final blow and effect the seeming miracle. This instant arrived, Eusapia acts with all her power, and, as rapidly as possible, allowing the action to be executed by the individual chosen (after having suggested to all the others not to see him), he, while unconscious and hypnotized, deceives his colleagues by himself accomplishing the action while believing that he is controlling the medium, who pretends to produce the manifestation at a distance by her mysterious power. It is at this moment that all the spectators, except the actor, who has become invisible to them, see, *e. g.*, the table move about by itself, the nails come out by themselves and fall to the ground, the joints of the boards torn apart, and the whole table break up and fall to pieces with a heavy crash."[1]

[1] To my mind, it is one of the strongest possible proofs of the reality of the phenomena—in the case of Eusapia—that such rubbish as this has to be advanced in order to escape accepting them as genuine. This is just the kind of criticism which emanates from a man who sits in his chair and criticizes the reports of others and spins fine theories—wide of the mark—instead of investigating the facts for himself. To any one who has witnessed the phenomena, the hypothesis is, of course, simply absurd. In the case of the Eusapian séances, the phenomena are undoubtedly real, and this has been proved by photography. The photographs alone

This is not a textual quotation, but a résumé of M. Tommasina's theory. M. Tommasina analyzes, in the same way, other phenomena reported as particularly striking by Foá and his colleagues, and attempts to show that in all cases Eusapia has already taken the precaution to place one of the spectators in such a condition that he could easily, by hypnotic suggestion, himself perform the wished-for phenomenon at the favorable moment—that is to say, when all the other sitters were also hallucinated for the moment in an appropriate manner.

To sum up, the hypnotist Eusapia influences her spectators one and all by her hypnotic power. First, by her immediate contact with one of them, she transforms him into a mere automaton, and he, in good faith, performs the actions which she suggests to him (as, *e. g.*, breaking up a table). Secondly, by the action of her "magnetism" upon the other sitters she makes passive subjects of them, and they perceive no more than she wishes them to perceive (the table falling in pieces), which results in consequence of

disprove such a conception, since no person is seen moving the objects! Then, again, I have never seen any one at her séances in a frame of mind other than that of a skeptical investigator—cautious, alert, active—while Eusapia herself, so far from giving suggestions, was lying, half-entranced, in the arms of her controllers. Does this look like suggestion? Finally, at the first three séances at Naples—attended only by Mr. Feilding and myself—are we to assume that one of us left the table and wandered about the room, producing phenomena, while the other one never noticed his absence? As I said before, to any one who has witnessed her séances, such explanations as the above are simple nonsense.—Tr.

systematized anæsthesia and negative hallucination (on account of which they cannot see their colleague breaking up the table). Third, the phenomenon having been produced and the séance terminated, she returns to these dupes their normal consciousness, with the clear remembrance not of what actually occurred, but of what was engraved on their memories by the suggestions of the medium.

All these assumptions are indeed indispensable in order to explain the material results which exist after the séance has terminated, and are attested to by the savants of Naples, of Turin, and elsewhere—the furniture topsy-turvy, objects broken, marks on the registering instruments, etc.[1]

This ingenious hypothesis has in its favor several accounts of collective hallucinations, such as those produced by the Hindu fakirs, with the aid of the tropical sun, or of powerful fumigations acting upon the senses of those around them.[2] But the hypothesis

[1] For details of these experiments, see the Report of Professor Bottazzi, and that of the Psychological Institute of Paris, whose Reports are summarized in *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*, pp. 109–18 and 129–34, respectively.

[2] Personally, I greatly doubt whether hallucination of this kind takes place at all at these performances. I am inclined, on the contrary, to believe that they are all the result of trickery (see my booklet *Hindu Magic*, in which I explain the tricks of the native conjurers—the mango-tree trick, the basket trick, the dry-sands tricks, the rope trick, voluntary interment, snake-charming, etc.). I made a careful search for the evidence bearing upon this question of hallucination in their performances when writing *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, and came to the deliberate conclusion that there was practically no first-hand evidence that

cannot be made to apply in such a case as that quoted. It extends the power of hypnotism beyond all known limits, and contradicts the knowledge possessed by those who have attended séances—that they have constantly remained in their natural mental condition, perfect masters of themselves and in full possession of their critical faculties and reason. A power of fascination so absolute that it can enthrall the most thoughtful savants unknowingly, and without leaving behind it the least retrospective suspicion, would hardly be less extraordinary than the reality of the phenomena which this hypothesis has been advanced to repudiate. Further, to justify such a theory, it would be necessary to suppose that the investigators who escaped this magic influence, and who, preserving their *sang froid* in the séances, while all their neighbors were subjugated to it, would be able to relate to us afterward what had really occurred. But the case has not yet been presented. Are we to conclude that no one has escaped the witchery of Eusapia at these good séances? And if so, how can one ever verify that? The hypothesis of a *universal* illusion has the fault of destroying itself; and with that I leave it to its fate!

such hallucinations existed, but much evidence that their performances were all the result of trickery. (*Loc. cit.*, pp. 386–93.) I have had no reason to change my belief since the above was written. On the contrary, I am becoming more and more certain that hallucination plays almost no part in spiritistic séances; while trickery pure and simple plays a very large part. In the case of Eusapia the only difference is that the phenomena happen to be *genuine*, but they are none the less *objective* for all that.—Tr.

A "SPIRIT FACE"

(Impression in clay of a head made by "an invisible" at one of Mme. Palladino's séances.)

5. *Composite Theory.*—If the preceding explanations considered separately cannot account in a satisfactory manner for the documents existing in favor of the Palladino phenomena, might it not suffice to combine them, thus mutually completing one another? Different tricks of Eusapia, when circumstances allow it; the natural charm which she exercises, and, by reason of which she profits, suggesting phenomena to her sitters which they are thus made to see; an excusable percentage of exaggeration on their part; finally, an accumulation of happy chances — all this united — would it not explain the miracles attributed to her without it being necessary to have recourse to supernormal causes which run counter to common sense as much as to orthodox science? Theoretically, it is possible, since all is possible; but, to speak frankly, I doubt it strongly. This reduction of the Palladino records to a simple conglomerate of natural causes appears to me more and more improbable as time goes on, and I fear that in the near future the defenders of this theory will have to admit that they have no case at all.

The Revenge of Eusapia

"*Il ne faut jurer de rien!*" Without being as amusing as a comedy of De Musset's, the situation which the history of Eusapia has furnished us is not lacking in humor. . . . Twelve years ago, when this illustrious medium was detected in fraud at Cambridge, and discarded by the English savants, it appeared that the

case had forever been settled and the question even of supernormal physical phenomena had been decided. The constant observers of Mme. Palladino—Richet, Ochorowicz, etc.—had strongly protested against the conclusions of the English Committee, that since she had tricked when all facilities had been given her to do so, she must trick constantly—even when the desired precautions were taken to prevent her from doing so. They pointed out that they had detected this same method of fraud, and that she had practised it before the so-called discovery of Hodgson; they strongly insisted upon the advisability of making fresh experiments with her before arriving at any definite conclusion. But Myers's reconversion and the unaltered conviction of Lodge were powerless to offset the negative verdict of Hodgson. . . . And thus the Society for Psychical Research became more and more incredulous of the reality of these phenomena as time passed. An Irish savant, indeed,[1] who had in the press a volume of spiritistic philosophy, based, in part, upon faculties attributed to Eusapia, had suspended its publication, feeling the ground crumbling beneath his feet. Myers himself did not dare to run counter to the decision so definitely arrived at, so that his two posthumous volumes ignored completely the name of Palladino! In brief, the condemnation of this medium appeared so thorough and

[1] W. F. Barrett, professor of physics at Dublin, to whom metapsychics is indebted, among other things, for his admirable historical researches and experiments with the divining-rod. (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xiii, pp. 2–282; xv, pp. 130–338.)

so irrevocable that Professor Lehman, of Copenhagen, in his splendid work on superstition and sorcery, had no hesitation in concluding that the exposure of Cambridge was a decisive turning-point in the history of spiritism—a death-blow to all the phenomena of physical mediumship, in which science must no longer interest herself!

Tempora mutantur! In spite of this excommunication, which placed her under the ban of science, Eusapia continued to be studied by some savants more solicitous of the truth than of their academic reputation. The results of their courage (and, it is necessary to say, of the better conditions of control and supervision which the medium herself insisted upon, little by little) was that instead of closing their eyes expressly, as did the learned gentleman in the time of Galileo, who refused to look through his telescope "for fear of being convinced," it became from day to day more difficult to reject the reality of the Palladino phenomena by reason of the added weight of their testimony and of objective proof of the reality of these phenomena which was heaped up in their favor. The gradual change of opinion which was thus produced spread even to the Anglo-Saxon world, hitherto so obdurate. Mr. Barrett concluded that he could now publish his volume,[1] so original and suggestive, without exposing himself to unjust criticism. The most refractory members of the Society for Psychical Research—Mr. Podmore, Mrs. Sidgwick, etc.—showed

[1] *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought*, 1908.

themselves, on their part, at least shaken in their radical skepticism toward the phenomena produced by Eusapia.[1] But it was not until Mr. Carrington (whose unrivaled perspicacity had brought to light and exposed the stratagems of American mediums) crossed the ocean to confront the artifices of the Neapolitan medium that any one considered it his duty to investigate her phenomena at first hand and upon her native shore. Now, as we all know, he was obliged to lower his flag before her, and recognize the authenticity of her phenomena. Here, then, is her revenge for all the humiliations of the past!

This is a turning-point in the history of scientific research. Is it to be lasting, or are we to expect a later reversal of belief and a return to the explanations: fraud and illusion? But why fear the future? "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"; and the present state of the question seems to me to necessitate, and even command, the acceptance of some supernormal hypothesis to account for these unheard-

[1] See Podmore, *Naturalization of the Supernatural*, 1908, p. 202, and Mrs. Sidgwick, in her account of the work of Morselli (*Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxi, pp. 516–24). Mrs. Sidgwick adds, in a postscript to her article, that Eusapia has been studied for the S. P. R. by Messrs. Feilding, Baggally, and Carrington, "all experts in the tricks of physical mediums," and that they came "essentially to the same conclusions as Morselli." *The Annals of Psychical Science* announces, on its side, that Mr. Carrington attended, in Naples, eleven séances under conditions of strict control, and that he emerged therefrom completely convinced of the reality of the phenomena—contrary to what was generally expected, and to what he himself expected.

of facts, witnessed by so many observers, who are, moreover, by no means inexperienced investigators.

SUPERNORMAL HYPOTHESES

These are numerous. M. Morselli, to whom we owe one of the most recent and the most complete accounts yet published, . . . holds to the theory of *psychodynamism:* the medium has the faculty of exteriorizing a force capable of plastically molding, in space, the figures produced in her imagination; one must join to this the theory of telepathy, by means of which she reflects the thoughts of her sitters, and one must conceive that these thoughts have the power of fashioning and modeling their own image. The plastic force, in other words, is exteriorized in such a manner as to give birth to teleplastic phantoms, or materializations —whose substance is provided by the medium, and whose appearance is shaped by the spectators.

To express this in a more concrete form: (1) The subconscious memories of the sitter are communicated to Eusapia by means of telepathy, and (2) these thoughts, shaping themselves in the mind of the medium, print their characteristics upon the exteriorized force which thus gradually takes on the appearance of the departed spirit.

In two words, *telepathy* and *teleplasty*. The peculiar power of the medium to produce physical effects, and particularly materializations, consists in giving an objective reality to the creations of her imagination,

which, in their turn, may only be the reflections of the thoughts of those around her.

"That is all very complicated and hair-splitting," the spiritists naturally say, struck by the apparent simplicity and truth of their own hypothesis. Professor Lombroso, *e.g.*, reproaches Morselli for his anti-spiritistic obstinacy, to him incredible in the face of the existing facts, and considers his position untenable. He can see in the work of the Genoese savant only a state of transition, "a bridge between the modern science of metapsychics and the classical science of psychiatry." Despite the authority of Lombroso, it is, it seems to me, a little hasty to foresee already the conversion of science to spiritism, and whatever may be the surprises which the future may hold for us, I consider that Morselli has remained faithful to the principles of the experimental method, and to a sane logic, in utilizing for his explanation only those forces or powers already known. . . . It is here, indeed, that the principal line of cleavage takes place between the different supernormal explanations. All of them, in reality, pass the bounds of established science. But one theory is a simple extension of the known laws of biology, . . . whereas the other flies at once to new entities and to laws and causes essentially strange to the empirical world of science. I do not say that this appeal to another world may not some day be justified by experience; but it runs counter to scientific ideals to accept this theory too easily. . . . We are justified, therefore, in postponing our accept-

ance of this theory of spiritism in the Palladino phenomena until every other theory has been exhausted.

On the contrary, Morselli's theory is not without its difficulties. The defenders of "common sense," and those who believe that fraud is an adequate explanation of the Palladino phenomena, would not for a moment tolerate any such extravagant hypothesis as that of psychodynamism, and would instantly condemn it, in the name of that same science which Morselli is trying to defend! But it must be remembered that the supernormal is not necessarily the supernatural. The supernormal of to-day is the normal of to-morrow. . . . Besides, we are far too inclined to charge "fraud" when, as a matter of fact, nothing of the kind has been proved, and merely on general principles. . . . Again, we must remember that Eusapia is a hysteric, and that her séances are full of semi-automatic states and conditions in which she is not responsible for what she does. . . . Truly, this connection of the Palladino phenomena with her abnormal state is no proof of their reality; it is conceivable that a somnambulic personality can perform certain tricks more cleverly than can the normal self, because of the condition of hyperæsthesia and increased motor agility which are often found in the abnormal condition. But, on the other hand, the fact that the manifestations depend upon a special abnormal condition in this medium renders them, perhaps, less incredible on that account. For the lessons of the past have

taught us that many strange phenomena said to be miraculous—and believed to be miracles by some, fraudulent by others, because both reasoned from the normal state—were found to be perfectly real and natural when once the abnormal condition was granted. "Neither miracle nor fraud," said Delbœuf, forty years ago, *à propos* of the facts of stigmatism—then deemed incredible, but at which no one familiar with psychopathology is to-day astonished. One knows what clear vision Delbœuf had. It would not surprise me to find that his aphorism might to-day be applied to the phenomena of Eusapia Palladino.

Another fact which tells in favor of the exercise of some unknown power as against the theory of fraud is that these phenomena depend upon her psychophysiological conditions on the one hand, and their reaction upon her on the other. One knows how the health of this medium—her moods, the degree of sympathy or antipathy with which her sitters inspire her, etc.—influences the success of her séances. It is also well known how the production of phenomena affects her organism—causing modifications of circulation, respiration, etc., and the symptoms of profound fatigue by which they are followed; the violent synchronous muscular twitchings which coincide with or immediately precede the production of phenomena; the exhaustion of the mysterious powers of Eusapia which one observes after a certain number of séances, and increases with every séance, obliging her, finally, to cease giving sittings in order to recuperate for

some months, like a battery which recharges itself during rest until the new accumulation of force urges it instinctively to recommence. All this gives to the Palladino phenomena a fluctuating and variable character which hardly agrees with the hypothesis of fraud. Every one knows that feats of skill—like everything which is artificial and acquired—become, with practice, more easy, more sure, and more economical in the necessary expenditure of force. Doubtless a prestidigitator or an acrobat cannot feel each day in high spirits, but this is not known to the public, since practice has lent to their performances a stability of perfection which renders them independent of momentary fluctuations of health, mood, fatigue, etc. It is quite the contrary with Eusapia. On the other hand, the rapidity and capriciousness, and the disconcerting nature of her phenomena, explain perfectly the contradictory impressions left upon the spectators—provided that they have been present at good séances, marked by an abundant display of supernormal facts, which occur in good light and in spite of the excellence of the control; or at bad séances, in which the medium, exhausted, incapable of producing anything when watched closely, demands complete darkness, and profits by the laxity of control to supplement by trickery the eclipse of her powers.

It goes without saying that these remarks do not pretend to impose the psychodynamic hypothesis upon the opponents of the supernormal explanation—facts alone can have that result—but simply to facili-

tate its acceptation by showing that it is not as arbitrary and as dogmatic as the simple explanation of fraud which is generally believed.

To return to the theory of Morselli. This is, I believe, the one which responds the best to the intricacies of the case, and which is, at the same time, necessary and sufficient to cover and explain all the supernormal phenomena attributed to Eusapia.

Certain of these phenomena, it is true, could be explained by simpler hypotheses. For example, luminous phenomena, observed sometimes in the neighborhood of the medium, might be attributed to certain processes of phosphorescence or electrification, as pathology and physiology have already shown us, when observing subjects who are not mediums. Again, the facts of simple telekinesis—levitations of the table, movements of objects without contact, tactile impressions, blows, pinches, etc.—have given birth to the theory of a "third arm" (pseudopodia, fluidic members, etc.), owing, perhaps, to a partial disengagement of the medium's double (astral body, "perisprit" of the medium).

Another hypothesis is that Eusapia in the trance state is endowed with a marvelous rapidity of movement, rivaling that of the gnat, whose wings move thousands of times a second. On this theory she could withdraw her hand from that of the controller, grasp the latter on the shoulder, or give him a slap, and replace her hand where it was, without the controller having perceived this loss of contact—which

would have lasted only about a six-thousandth of a second—and only appreciating it some time after the blow was struck by reason of the persistence of tactile impressions. In like manner she could in full light remove or break objects and return to her chair without our retinæ being able to perceive this going and coming—a hundred times too rapid to conquer their inertia! This explanation of telekinesis, by simple tachykinesis—postulating a series of movements by Eusapia so rapid as to be beneath the threshold of our perceptions—has not as yet been proposed; that is why I merely sketch it here, leaving it to the future to decide whether or not it is true.

But all these hypotheses remain insufficient in face of the cases of materialization of hands and faces without physical resemblance to that of Eusapia, of which the Italian observers, especially, report to us so many examples. And unless we reject these cases, *a priori*, as too difficult to believe, we must—if we wish to have any theory at all consistent with the facts—formulate one at least as far-reaching as that of Morselli. The only modification in the theory which these facts seem to suggest (and would it be any simplification?) consists in supposing that, instead of the sitter transferring his memories, telepathically, to the medium, the medium, on the contrary, transfers her psychodynamic forces to the sitter. I will explain.

When, *e. g.*, in Eusapia's séances Messrs. Morselli, Venzano, etc., saw and touched faces different from

those of Eusapia, but which could—like those of the famous "John"—be productions of her imagination, it is clear that these apparitions, supposed to be real, are sufficiently explained by the materialization of the medium's conception of that person. But when phantoms which are objectified issue no longer from Eusapia, but from the emotional complexes of the sitters—when one witnesses, *e. g.*, the apparition of a dead person whom Eusapia had never known, and who returns to express his regret to one of the spectators—we may accept one of two possible interpretations. For Morselli these are the memories or the emotional complexes of the spectator, which are transferred to the imagination of the medium (or, more exactly, which induce telepathically their twin), whence they are externalized outside the medium by her psychodynamic power. But it might also be admitted that it is Eusapia who transmits her psychodynamic forces to the spectator, and he, in turn, by a sort of catalytic action due to the psychodynamic activity of the medium combines his own subjective emotional complexes with his own latent psychodynamic forces, and in this way his own complexes are objectified.

It would be interesting to trace the history of the psychodynamic theory—of which the first scientific germs are to be found in the "psychode" of Thury and the "fluid" of Gasparin (without mentioning the occult philosophers)—as well as to examine the elaborations to which it is susceptible. . . . But, while

this is at present impossible, I think that the facts themselves are now beyond dispute.

The case of Eusapia is not unique. . . . The establishment of her phenomena, however, casts a retrospective corroboration upon all those historical cases of which we have read so much. Also, other and newer cases fortify that of Eusapia. . . . My colleague, Doctor Sidney Alrutz, whose psycho-physiological works are well known, guaranteeing his qualities as a positive and minute investigator, has written me that he has had the opportunity to experiment a number of times under excellent conditions of control with different non-professional mediums—ladies of good Swedish families—and that he has observed phenomena of telekinesis in their presence, of movements absolutely inexplicable by any known laws of physics and physiology. . . . At Warsaw, also, Doctor Ochorowicz has discovered a new medium, producing physical phenomena, whom he hopes to develop in a scientific manner and who seems to promise results of great precision and nicety, and, at the same time, absolutely stupefying and passing all that has been related up to the present time. Taken all in all, it appears that there are many cases of physical mediums which the future may hope to investigate, and it is to be hoped that it will do so, and will know how to separate the true from the false, and discover some empirical laws and formulate some less nebulous theory than that of psychodynamism.

I repeat, in conclusion, that any theory, if at all

complete, must attack the Palladino phenomena from a double standpoint—that of *physics*, inasmuch as they take place in the external world, are material entities, and hence depend upon the laws of mechanics, the principle of the conservation of energy, etc.; and that of *psychology*, inasmuch as we deal with mental processes and endeavor to determine the nature, origin, etc., of the mentality with which we are dealing. Of these two problems, or groups of problems, the former should claim the attention of physicists and physiologists especially, while the second—which deals with the general question of psychogenesis and the identity of spirits—can only be dealt with in a satisfactory manner when we know more of psychology, normal and abnormal, individual and collective.

RECENT DOCUMENTS[1]

The Report of M. Courtier

A careful reading of this report has shown me how, without appearing to be so, it is, at basis, humiliating for normal explanations (fraud, hallucination, etc.). This does not appear at first sight, because of the singular manner in which it is expressed. Instead of following the usual simple method (which would have

[1] (June, 1910.) Since the preceding pages were written, eighteen months ago, the question of the physical phenomena has been enriched by many new observations—which further confirm me in my belief as to the authenticity of the Palladino phenomena. I will summarize them rapidly.

A TABLE LEVITATION

(At one of Eusapia Palladino's séances before the French Psychological Institute. Both of Eusapia's feet can be seen on the floor, and her right hand on the top of the head of her right-hand controller. His left hand is across both her knees. Her left hand is invisible in the photograph, but is held by M. Courtier, who sits to her left.)

consisted in relating each séance, discussing the notable phenomena in it, and the conditions under which they were produced, in such a manner as to show how, and to what extent, they were explicable by known causes), M. Courtier adopted a plan much cleverer, but one which confuses the reader and plunges him into complete uncertainty. The first chapters bury him under an avalanche of facts, upon the evidential nature of which the reporter refrains from all judgment. We are then led into diverse researches in physics and physiology, interesting, it is true, but which lead you to no firm conclusion as to the nature of the Palladino phenomena themselves. Finally, the last chapter gives us a complete summary of all the methods of fraud resorted to by Eusapia, quoting several specific séances, and this leaves in the mind of the reader, as a last impression, the suspicion that all the prodigies of Eusapia might have been produced by trickery.

The discussion of this report at a special session of the Psychological Institute seems to have been conducted with the same determination not to compromise themselves, and the same determination to prevent the public from gathering any precise opinion as to the reality or the non-reality of the Palladino phenomena. There was in Geneva, in my childhood, an excellent man, devoted to the welfare of the community, but so timorous and desirous of avoiding all extremes that, in the popular vote, where the citizens had decided to "yes" or "no" a project of law, he

have recognized the inexplicable character of these facts.)

The Researches of Mr. Carrington[1]

The researches of Carrington arrived just in time to complete, in a most happy fashion, those of the savants of the Psychological Institute. As a matter of fact, these latter, although conducted by physicists and physiologists of the first rank, are always open to the classical objection that they were not prestidigitators, and that all their science does not qualify them to detect the most simple tricks. One cannot raise this objection against Mr. Carrington and his two colleagues—Messrs. Baggally and Feilding. It is worth while quoting a page from the report of these gentlemen:

"Mr. Baggally is . . . an amateur conjurer and is exceptionally well posted on all the tricks and devices resorted to by fraudulent mediums. Most of them he can perform himself. He has been constantly investigating the subject for more than thirty-five years, and during all that time *he has never witnessed a*

[1] I think I should say that, while Professor Flournoy gives me the chief credit for these experiments, this is equally due to Messrs. Feilding and Baggally; the task of establishing the facts was joint, and the original report was joint—being undertaken on behalf of the S. P. R. The text refers for the most part to my book on Eusapia. The American séances were, of course, in no way connected with the S. P. R., or either of my former colleagues—being merely an attempt on my part to interest the American savants in her phenomena.—TR.

single genuine physical phenomenon—with the exception, perhaps, of a few occurring at a previous séance of Eusapia which he had attended some years before. Throughout his investigations he had invariably detected fraud, and nothing but fraud. I think it is safe to say, therefore, that a man of his caliber, armed as he was with his past knowledge of mediums' histories and their methods, would not be likely to be taken in by a few simple tricks, such as the substitution of hands or feet, which Eusapia occasionally practises!

"Mr. Feilding, in his position as honorary secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, is constantly investigating cases of all kinds, and delights especially in running down cases of 'poltergeists,' physical phenomena, etc. He has an excellent and keen judgment in all such investigations. He has been engaged in this work, on and off, for some ten years, but during all that time *he has never seen one physical phenomenon which appeared to him to be conclusively proved*—with the exception of certain phenomena which, again, had occurred in Eusapia's presence at a previous séance attended by him in Paris. We may well suppose, therefore, that Mr. Feilding, also, was quite enabled to detect fraud had such existed, and was not at all likely to be taken in by the simple process of substitution which he, in common with all of us, well knew existed.

"As for myself [H. Carrington], I can but say that, during twelve years' continued investigations of the physical phenomena of spiritualism, during which

period I have sat many score, if not hundreds of times, with mediums, and traveled many hundreds of miles in order to see genuine physical phenomena if such existed, I had invariably been disappointed, and until I had attended my first séance with Eusapia *had never seen one single manifestation of the physical order which I could consider genuine.* On the contrary, I had always detected fraud, and, being an amateur conjurer myself, was enabled in nearly every instance to detect the *modus operandi* of the trick usually the first time I saw it. In my *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism* I devoted more than three hundred pages to the psychology of deception and to a detailed exposure of the tricks and devices of fraudulent mediumship."[1]

These three gentlemen—who could pass for knowing something of prestidigitation and of mediumistic trickery—held in Naples, in November and December, 1908, eleven séances with Eusapia, from which they emerged absolutely convinced of the genuineness of the Palladino phenomena—or, if one prefers it, of their non-explicability by fraud. Certainly, one can always ask whether Eusapia does not simply help herself by methods of fraud so far unknown, and of which neither savants nor prestidigitators have any knowledge, and of the nature of which they have not the slightest

[1] Hereward Carrington, *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*, pp. 153–54. [It should be noted that this quotation is from my book, and not from our joint report, as Professor Flournoy says.—Tr.]

suspicion. Perhaps! Perhaps, also, that which we call undetected fraud is the manifestation of a very rare faculty, of so rare a character, in fact, that Carrington and his colleagues had never met with any trace of it in the course of their long years of research, but none the less real for that. But in adopting this latter hypothesis, one prevents one's self from discovering anything new, for one bars the road to further progress when one concludes *a priori* that trickery alone is the true explanation. Mr. Carrington does not hold to this theory, in Eusapia's case, of undiscovered modes of trickery, and proceeds to examine the various explanatory theories so far advanced, and does not hesitate, for his part, to adopt the spiritistic interpretation as being the only one which adequately explains *all* the types of phenomena. . . . The case which Mr. Carrington quotes as a typical example of the existing facts, proving to him the intervention of discarnate spirits, is the following. It is the case of a materialized apparition, in one of Eusapia's séances, of a departed lady with whom one of the sitters had had a little misunderstanding, and who returned to make apologies. Here is the incident in question, which M. Venzano narrates, he himself being the hero:

"In spite of the dimness of the light I could distinctly *see* Madam Palladino and my fellow-sitters. Suddenly I perceived that behind me was a form, fairly tall, which was leaning its head upon my left shoulder and sobbing violently, so that those present

could hear the sobs; it kissed me repeatedly. I clearly perceived the outlines of this face, which touched my own, and I felt the very fine and abundant hair in contact with my left cheek, so that I could be quite sure it was a woman. The table then began to move, and by typtology gave the name of a close family connection who was known to no one present except myself. She had died some time before, and, on account of incompatibility of temperament, there had been serious disagreements between us. I was so far from expecting this typtological response that I at first thought this was a case of coincidence of name; but while I was mentally forming this reflection I felt a mouth, with warm breath, touch my left ear and whisper, *in a low voice in Genoese dialect*, a succession of sentences, the murmur of which was audible to the sitters. These sentences were broken by bursts of weeping, and their gist was to repeatedly implore pardon for injuries done to me, with a fullness of detail connected with family affairs which could only be known to the person in question. The phenomenon was so real that I felt impelled to reply to the excuses offered me with expressions of affection, and to ask pardon in my turn if any resentment of the wrongs referred to had been excessive. But I had scarcely uttered the first syllables when two hands, with exquisite delicacy, applied themselves to my lips and prevented my continuing. The form then said to me, 'Thank you,' embraced me, kissed me, and disappeared."

For Mr. Carrington it was, in this case, the dead lady herself who, materializing by means of the psychic force or vitality of the medium, came to effect this scene of reconciliation. In my estimation, it is evident, on the contrary, that it is merely the objectified emotional complex existing within the subconsciousness of M. Venzano. The difficulty of comprehending *how* a psychic complex foreign to Eusapia can objectify itself and be materialized by the aid of the mysterious forces of this medium is the same on every theory, whether it emanates from a discarnate or an incarnate individual; but, scientifically, the second is infinitely more simple, since it appeals only to individual consciousness already known and empirically established. It is satisfactorily explained when one recalls the familiar processes of the subliminal which the latent memory of M. Venzano had retained of this dead person, and, though confused, these were revived, with all the associated memories of the departed, by reason of the dramatic setting of the séance. These probably existed, helter-skelter, in marginal regions of consciousness, and objectified themselves in the pathetic scene of reconciliation. M. Venzano does not tell us—as he would scarcely have failed to do were it the case—that the Genoese dialect of the returning spirit and the details of the family history which she told him exceeded his own stock of memories; or where his imagination extended the veridical elements of his little romance. As for the typtological automatisms, by which his hands (which probably rested on the

table, according to the usual custom) revealed the name of the departed, this further corroborates the supposition that we are dealing with an emotional complex in the subconsciousness of M. Venzano.

On the contrary, the spiritistic explanation necessitates, as Mr. Carrington himself recognizes, a number of preliminary hypotheses, which he enumerates as follows: "1. That consciousness exists after the dissolution of the organism. 2. That it preserves its personal identity, including memory. 3. That this consciousness ('soul') inhabits a body of the same shape as our physical body. 4. That it is constantly about us—in our surroundings—capable of exercising certain functions to us deemed supernormal, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, etc. 5. That it is normally invisible to us, but may become visible under certain conditions as yet unknown to one or more individuals and can thus more or less directly communicate with them. 6. That such an intelligence can only act on the material world *through some intermediary* and *not directly*—either upon a nervous mechanism (probably indirectly) or upon inert matter (almost certainly indirectly)—through some semi-fluidic intermediary. Only by means of this etheric or vital intermediary is mind enabled to act upon matter and the material world." [1]

Now, all these accessory (or rather fundamental) hypotheses may be true in themselves, and for my part I have no philosophic objection to the first two;

[1] *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*, p. 293.

but still, not one of them has up to the present been scientifically proved, so that it is contrary to the experimental method to admit an explanation so laden with arbitrary suppositions. I must again emphasize the fact that I do not speak of the *physical* phenomena of materialization, which remains equally supernormal and enigmatical on either theory, but of the mental phenomena which accompany it, and which one need not attribute to a discarnate personality, as they are easily explained by known psychological processes.[1]

I may add that while reviewing the other cases of materialization published by M. Venzano, and in a general way all those which I have been able to find on the subject of Eusapia, I have encountered no exceptions to this rule; all were easily explained (from the point of view of psychology, and setting aside the difficulty of comprehending the *physical* phenomenon of materialization) by the activity of the emotional complexes of some of the spectators—giving birth, in their subconscious imagination, to a dramatic reconstruction of their personality. In those numerous cases where the interested spectator declares that

[1] Professor Flournoy speaks of my theory as containing many arbitrary suppositions, etc., but I may reply, in turn, that the psychodynamic hypothesis, which I examined in detail and rejected as insufficient in my book, is one huge assumption; and if we take into account the physical as well as the psychological phenomena of materialization I think that my theory is by no means more complicated or more fully assumed than the other. See my two chapters containing a review of theories, *loc. cit.*, pp. 240–301, and especially pp. 288–300, and the final chapter, "Biological and Psychological Considerations."—Tr.

he had not expected such an apparition in the least, that he had not thought of this person for a long time, that nothing was further from his thoughts than this person, etc., it shows simply that the quiescent condition of the complex facilitates the emergence, its exteriorization and transmission to the medium, or renders this transmission more favorable.

It is hardly necessary to add that this difference of theoretical interpretation between Mr. Carrington and myself does not in the least diminish the value which I attach to his researches; and that, in particular, I hold his report on Eusapia to be the most valuable contribution to the subject in the whole history of the supernormal, and one which pleads the most powerfully in favor of the authenticity of the Palladino phenomena.

Professor Münsterberg's "Exposé"

In the autumn of 1909 Mr. Carrington brought Eusapia Palladino to America, in the hope of definitely establishing the authenticity of the phenomena before the savants of the United States. The attempt seems to have failed completely.[1] Whether Eusapia was too

[1] It would take a great deal of space to explain the causes of this apparent failure—more apparent than real. I will only state that the first twenty séances or so given by Eusapia in this country were comparatively good ones, and at these but little fraud was ever detected. I am convinced that it did not exist. At the later séances, which took place at Columbia University and at the house of Professor Lord, much fraud was detected, and, indeed, Eusapia could produce so few phenomena, and phenomena of so dubious a nature, that one can hardly blame the investigators

fatigued, suffering from the effects of change of climate, or whether her powers had really declined, or whatever the cause, she did not furnish any convincing phenomena to the American savants, and they, like those of Cambridge in 1895, found in her only fraud and dissimulation. But since no full account of these séances has yet been published, it is difficult to know exactly what happened there.

Among the rare information to which we are reduced for the moment, that which has made the most sensation is the article, as clever as amusing, published in a popular magazine by Professor Münsterberg, of Harvard,[1] well known as an invincible enemy of "psychical research." Professor Münsterberg considers that all the phenomena produced in the presence of Eusapia are fraudulent. He relates in a fascinating manner how in a dark séance, where he was present, a spectator, lying on the floor near the chair of the medium, the better to observe her, caught her bare heel at the very moment she was reaching her leg

for their conclusions. This was due to the fact that Eusapia was completely tired out and exhausted as the result of the numerous séances given by her. And, as Professor Flournoy points out, when this happens no convincing phenomena are obtained with this medium, but, on the contrary, much fraud invariably is practised in an attempt to reproduce the phenomena which fail to appear. My conclusions on these points are precisely similar to those of Professor Flournoy, who has, in my estimation, taken a remarkably clear and philosophical view of her case in this volume.—Tr.

[1] H. Münsterberg, "My Friends the Spiritualists," *Metropolitan Magazine*, February, 1910. For other criticisms of this article by Münsterberg, see that of Hyslop, "Eusapia Palladino," *Journal*, American S. P. R., vol. iv, April, 1910, p. 169, etc.

behind her in order to obtain possession of a stool.[1] This liberation of a foot, resorted to by Eusapia for twenty years past, when permitted, would prove simply that Professor Münsterberg (as he says with praiseworthy frankness in the course of his article) was a novice at this sort of investigation, as were his companions, since they were content with a séance taking place in complete darkness, and did not know how to control the medium properly. This classical example of fraud on the part of Eusapia does not in the least weaken the evidence for those phenomena positively established by observers more familiar with the necessary precautions and in good light.

But what is still more curious in the attack of Professor Münsterberg, and what gives it a real value, is the astonishing fact that in the early part of his article he is willing to grant supernormal faculties in Eusapia; when examined closely one finds that he is favorably disposed to them. Yet in this article the author has

[1] This is but one of the many statements contained in Professor Münsterberg's article which is pure fiction. I have in my possession a letter from the gentleman who grasped Eusapia's heel on this historic occasion, and he states that he is not at all sure that her heel was bare! As a matter of fact, it was *not*. The shorthand report of this séance shows, further, that Professor Münsterberg was repeatedly touched, as though by a hand, when he was holding *both* the medium's hands in his, and when one leg was resting across his knees, the other leg being held by the opposite controller. It would, however, take too long to point out all the inaccuracies and fictions contained in the various "exposés" written on Eusapia during her visit here. When the full reports of these séances are published, these will be apparent. Meanwhile, as "Truth is the daughter of Time and not of Authority," I feel that I can afford to bide my time in silence.—TR.

again published his dislike for these phenomena—which he considers irreconcilable with his system of philosophy, and the reality of which would seem to him to carry a mortal blow to "science" such as he conceives it. His animus, indeed, does not allow him to be a faithful and conscientious observer, and, at the climax of his article, he is forced in spite of himself to favor the hypothesis which he is fighting. Indeed, the astonishing incidents which he records, and which he explains by the supposition of secret artifices on the part of Eusapia (hooks on her shoes, the use of a bellows, tubes to blow out the curtains, etc.), are the exact repetition, and at the same time a splendid confirmation, of those numerous occasions when in Europe these phenomena have been observed by others who have taken all necessary precautions to exclude absolutely all tricks of the kind.

At the same time Münsterberg tells us that immediately before the affair of the heel, "John" (Eusapia's control) "touched me distinctly on the hip, then on the arm, and then finally touched me on the neck; *I felt perfectly the hand and the fingers, which was far from agreeable.*" And as at the time he was controlling the hands of Eusapia, and also one foot, he contends that she touched him with the other foot, without in any way betraying the subterfuge by any movement of the rest of her body. Superficially this explanation appears simple when one considers the dislocations and distortions which clowns are in the habit of making. However, when we seek to repre-

sent these things in concrete form (this movement by Eusapia, in the position she relatively occupied to Münsterberg, according to his account of this incident), we encounter such anatomico-physiological impossibilities[1] that one wonders at what point the operation of a similar feat of strength might pass as being more admissible or less supernormal than the production of an ectoplasm. In short, the "exposé" of Münsterberg is full of details truly incredible, and incompatible with his own earlier views. On the contrary, it agrees marvelously with the earlier observations upon which rests the psychodynamic hypothesis, so that the question remains open whether the pretended fraud, reported with so much gusto by the illustrious professor, was *really* a fraud, or if this "heel" which was seized was not perhaps in reality a materialization!

It is said that other American investigators who have seriously studied her case have also met with fraud and trickery, simulated trance, and no trace of

[1] In a recent article Dr. Stanley L. Krebs—who does not admit the existence of supernormal powers in Eusapia—shows that, in order to correspond with the description of M. Münsterberg, and similar explanations, it would be necessary for Eusapia's leg to be articulated at the knee, upon a motionless hip, making a rotation of about 135°, as well as an elongation of almost double its length, of an incredible contortion, to get her leg onto the table, and, finally, a transformation of her foot into a hand which grasped him between the thumb and fingers! M. Krebs, who attended two séances with Eusapia, asserts that he has discovered her true methods, and has explained them to us in his booklet *Trick Methods of Eusapia Palladino*. See also Krebs, *Journal*, American S. P. R., vol. iv, p. 337.

true hysteria.[1] The two latter assertions are contrary to all those medical observations of Eusapia made by the Italian psychiatrists (Morselli, Lombroso, etc.). But they do not weaken it greatly; for Eusapia's increasing age may have brought with it the cure of her hysteria, and at the same time the loss of her telekinetic faculties. The poor woman is now reduced largely to the rôle of sustaining her former reputation and of continuing to earn her living by giving séances. The possibility exists, nevertheless, that the instinctive prejudice of the savants of the New World against physical phenomena, on account of the extent of fraudulent mediumship there, and their very natural desire to catch Eusapia in fraud, have rendered them insensible to the supernormal phenomena which she can still produce. . . . This supposition appears to me at least as plausible as that of a universal stupidity among the numerous observers of the Old World who stand for the authenticity of her phenomena. Be-

[1] This is easily explained. At the séances held in Columbia University Eusapia would not allow herself to pass into trance simply because of her apprehension that her investigators—all of them novices in psychic investigation—would not know how to treat her while she was in that condition. In this she was, I think, more or less justified. But as all the striking phenomena take place in the trance state, it is not surprising that the investigators should remain skeptical as to the reality of her facts, or fail to be convinced by them. As to the trance state, this probably did not exist at these séances simply because it was inhibited by Eusapia. In numerous earlier séances, which were conducted by myself, the trance state nearly always supervened, because Eusapia had confidence in my ability to manage her while in that condition. I think this fully explains the apparent contradiction, which is thus shown to be no contradiction at all.—Tr.

tween these two alternatives the future will decide—or will not decide!

New Personal Observations

At about the same time that these Palladino experiments were in progress, I had an opportunity to assist at several psychic investigations which, while they do not concern Eusapia, seem to me to confirm her phenomena very strongly.

1. There is first the case of Mlle. Tomczyk, about whom Ochorowicz has written so many astounding articles, and with whom he wished to procure for me five séances in the spring of 1909. The first séance, which took place at Paris, left me in no doubt as to the reality of simple telekinesis. The conditions were excellent. It was March 26, at 5 P.M., and, in spite of the fact that the curtains of the window were half lowered, the light of day fully sufficed. We were only four, including the medium, around a little table, on which was placed a large letter-weight, which Mlle. Tomczyk forced down, after several trials, as far as eighty grams—and a ball of celluloid, which she caused to jump to and fro and to go and come in various directions, etc. There was always a distance of several centimeters between her fingers and the object moved. These are the bare facts, the details of which one cannot either remember or describe afterward in exact detail; but what I remember perfectly is that at the moment when an object was moved there was

no mechanical attachment of any kind, such as threads, hairs, etc., for which I was on the constant lookout. I also examined carefully the fingers of the medium several times during the course of the séance. To me it appeared impossible to explain the phenomena by supposing that any hidden mechanism was producing them, since the relative position of her hands to the objects, and their movements, disproved this. The objects appeared to be drawn by an unknown force, variable in intensity and direction, but impossible to imitate in any way by needles or threads, flexible or rigid.

Upon his departure from Paris with his medium, at the beginning of May, Doctor Ochorowicz desired to call at Geneva, and hold there a series of séances, to which he invited, besides myself, Professors Claparède, Cellerier, Batelli, and my son. Unfortunately, exhausted by the week of experiments which she had undergone at the "Great Capital," Mlle. Tomczyk was not at her best, and did not fulfil our expectations. At three séances, where we were all present, she succeeded, with great difficulty and after many fruitless attempts, in moving small objects without contact, but in so poor a light that it was often necessary to open our eyes wide to assure ourselves that we were not the subjects of an illusion. Besides that, the medium desired to make other experiments, which were manifestly purely fraudulent. Altogether, our impressions were divided; Professor Batelli was of the opinion that all the movements of objects at a dis-

tance could be explained by the employment either of a hair or of a thread held between the hands of the medium, or of a rigid body, too fine to be seen, coming from her corsage, and with which, while leaning over, she could push the objects on the table. My other colleagues and myself, while recognizing that this hypothesis would suffice to explain certain facts, felt that we had assisted at the production of some phenomena very difficult to explain by such mechanical devices, and appearing to indicate the existence of other forces, as yet unknown.

Mlle. Tomczyk, who was always embarrassed by the presence of several sitters, asked to give me a special séance, in which she repeated for me the same experiments—movements of small objects on the table under my eyes, etc., and in much better light. This séance, without being as good throughout as that which I had attended in Paris, at least enabled me to convince myself afresh, and with complete certainty, of the reality of several telekinetic phenomena, which were produced under conditions excluding, in my judgment, the employment of mechanical apparatus of any kind or any known trick.

To sum up: without pronouncing upon the facts and theories which Dr. Ochorowicz has published on the subject of Mlle. Tomczyk,[1] I believe I have established in the presence of this medium, among doubtful

[1] See *Annals of Psychical Science*, April–June, 1909, pp. 271–84; July – September, 1909, pp. 333 – 99; October – December, 1909, pp. 515–33, etc., for accounts of this medium.—Tr.

or manifestly fraudulent facts, very evident telekinetic phenomena, implying some faculty apparently supernormal, and of the same character as those of Eusapia, which therefore support this latter by retrospective corroboration.

2. At the Sixth Psychological Congress, which was held in Geneva in 1909, Professor Alrutz brought with him a small instrument of his own invention, by means of which he believes he has proved among persons of a peculiar temperament motor faculties whose existence is, as yet, absolutely unsuspected by orthodox physiologists. Professor Alrutz invited me to assist in two séances, in which we experimented upon some of the feminine members of the Congress who desired to try it. The first, in which the subject was Mme. Glika, yielded nothing conclusive. But at the second, at which Professor Alrutz attempted to increase the force by adding two other members of the Congress (strangers, who had appeared to him to possess suitable temperaments), it succeeded fully, and I was able to prove conclusively, after three trials, and under conditions precluding all possibility of fraud or illusion, that the will of these ladies concentrated upon a certain material object, with a desire to produce a movement of it, ended by producing this movement, as if by means of a fluid or an invisible force obeying their mental command.

This paradoxical phenomenon, which is of precisely the same order and almost of the same intensity as

the telekinetic phenomena in the case of Eusapia . . . is, in my eyes, a powerful confirmation of these latter. I can no longer have any doubt that we are in her case in the presence of a faculty whose existence will soon be definitely established by experiments conducted along the same lines as those inaugurated by Professor Alrutz.

3. In February, 1910, M. Claparède invited to Geneva the celebrated medium Carancini, on account of some interesting reports rendered by an eye-witness of his exploits in Rome. Unfortunately, after nine séances, held in the laboratory of the University, the results were as unfavorable as possible to this medium, whose phenomena appeared to us manifestly fraudulent, and his trance itself most suspicious. . . . M. Claparède's remarkable article on this medium's séances renders further discussion on my part unnecessary.

I contend, however, that the failure of this medium has indirectly furnished me with a new argument in favor of the reality of the Palladino phenomena, it being that, under conditions of light and perfect control of all four members, in which I have seen inexplicable facts produced in the séances of Eusapia, there is nothing at all produced in the case of Carancini. That has confirmed me in my belief that the true Palladino phenomena cannot be imitated by trickery—at least by ordinary trickery, such as that practised by Carancini, and that Eusapia's fraud, if

it be fraud, is in all cases of such a degree of subtlety and refinement that no one has as yet been able to show in what respect it differs from an authentically supernormal phenomenon.[1]

CONCLUSION

It is probable that, for science, the case of Eusapia will remain for a long time an undecipherable enigma and an apple of discord among those who occupy themselves with metapsychical research.

So far as I myself am concerned, I wish to say that

[1] With this estimate I agree perfectly, and stated in Appendix G of our book, *Death: Its Causes and Phenomena*, pp. 534–535, why the fraud detected in the case of Eusapia did not deter me from believing in her powers. My experience agrees with that of Professor Flournoy. Eusapia *can* produce genuine phenomena; she also tricks; and the duty of the careful and patient investigator is to separate the two classes of phenomena. It should be noted, in this connection, that Mr. Feilding, with whom I shared the Naples investigation, had five sittings with this medium in November, 1910, and had no difficulty in detecting fraud throughout his sittings. The character of the phenomena, and the degree of control permitted, were quite different from our former Naples experiments, but similar to that observed in America. (See his Report in *Proceedings*, S. P. R., vol. xxv, pp. 57–69.) Like myself, however, Mr. Feilding still contends that Eusapia can produce genuine phenomena. As for Carancini, he was brought to England in the summer of 1909, and studied by the S. P. R., and the account of his séances appeared in the Society's *Journal*, January, 1910, pp. 193–211. Nothing but fraud was discovered throughout. The report was written by Mr. Baggally, the *third* member of our original Naples group, who studied Eusapia with Mr. Feilding and myself; and he also still believes in her ability to produce genuine phenomena at times in spite of her fraud. From his report it is obvious that no phenomena whatever can be obtained by Carancini under the conditions permitted by Eusapia, in which many phenomena were observed by us.—Tr.

the Palladino phenomena—strange as they appear at first sight, and inadmissible as they are to those who have never seen them, and who are not familiar with the literature bearing upon the case—are to-day, in my eyes, established beyond doubt, so considerable is the weight of proof in their favor. The failures of the past and the future, the absence even of new mediums of an analogous kind, do not, in my judgment, suffice to counterbalance my personal experience—supported by that of other investigators more qualified than myself. In default of new evidence, confirming this case, I conclude simply that the powers of Palladino are being weakened or extinguished with age, and that cases such as hers are those rare exceptions which are produced perhaps but once in a generation or a century. But all the negative evidence could not prevail, in my judgment, against the mass of rich and serious evidence which exists in favor of the Palladino phenomena.

Doubtless, dogma should not exist in science, and "all is possible"—even that the innumerable witnesses who guarantee the supernormal character of the phenomena may have been deceived, and were victims of some machination; but such a universal error would, in its turn, be a fact just as astonishing and incomprehensible; and before admitting it "the proof would have to be proportioned to the strangeness of the facts"—proof much stronger than the simple negation of those who have not had the opportunity of being present at one of the good séances. It is not that we

rely, for proof, upon those séances when in darkness Eusapia might liberate one of her limbs, or upon those where, better controlled, she has not been able to produce phenomena, but upon those very different cases where, irreproachably controlled and in full light, she has produced phenomena which savants and prestidigitators alike have as yet been unable to explain or duplicate under the same conditions. There must be something more to neutralize the evidence of so many facts—some adequate theory capable of explaining these so-called illusions—rather than a mere offhand dictum, unsupported by evidence and incapable of actual demonstration.

I understand perfectly, on the other hand, that those who have not personally attended any of the good séances of the Neapolitan will remain in doubt. They are perfectly right in opposing their prudent *non liquet* to all descriptions which, however convincing to the author, menace, in their eyes, the edifice of established science. One can never be clear, explicit, precise enough to take the place in their case of personal observation, which alone insures conviction. The skeptical critic is quite right in not accepting such facts without sufficient proof and without personal verification; and were I in their place I should believe as they do! Indeed, they would appear to me to be neglecting their duty in acting otherwise; for each one of us has his rôle to play in the construction of the edifice of human knowledge. They are the necessary drags on the chariot of science, and their resistance,

by enforcing greater rigor and exactitude, is an indispensable factor to all true progress.

Appendix to Chapter VII

In the course of his volume Professor Flournoy gives a large number of cases of physical phenomena, observed or collected by himself, most of which were negative in their results. The following case, however, presents several features of interest; and because of its bearing on these phenomena it should, perhaps, be placed as an appendix to this chapter.—Tr.

Traces of unknown physical forces

In the course of the years 1896–99 M. Eug. Demole and myself often tried to collect instances of unknown forces, of emanations issuing from different mediums, who were supposed to move tables, etc., at a distance. At the numerous séances of the three mediums—Mme. Darel, Mme. Saxo, and Mlle. Smith, and at all those which we obtained with Mme. Fel and Mlle. Dyck, we placed in the neighborhood of the medium very small objects easily displaced—a small bell, small cardboard boxes blackened with smoke, which would show the slightest touch, etc. But all this (aside from the photographic plates, of which I shall speak presently) gave us no result. We did not succeed any better in our attempts at spirit photography . . . though a

"spirit," who was shown to Mme. Saxo, under the form of a great Egyptian high priest, holding a parchment upon which were inscribed the communications, appeared to her so clearly and with an objectivity so evident that she could not doubt the possibility of photographing it. . . . This high priest himself promised us success, and condescended after several trials to tell us (always by means of messages upon his parchment, which Mme. Saxo read more or less freely) exactly how to take the photograph—in which direction and how to focus the apparatus, etc. These experiments took place in a perfectly dark alcove off the séance-room, which Mme. Saxo entered, following her guide. But in spite of the fact that we followed with the utmost exactitude the directions given by the invisible through Mme. Saxo—focusing the camera here and there with great care—nothing was ever obtained upon any of our plates.

The results were, however, different in the case of some plates held near the body of the medium, between her hands, on her knees, etc. These plates were inclosed by their usual wooden frames, and enveloped in two or three thicknesses of black paper fastened with string. All this occurred while the mediums were seated at the table, which kept tipping, and at which they had their visions. The duration of the contact, or of the imposition of hands, was from half a minute to three-quarters of an hour. Once developed, with all necessary precautions, all these plates were found to be more or less cloudy; that is to

say, they gave the impression of having received a luminous impression not directed by an object. This seemed, indeed, to indicate an action due to the "forces" or "fluids" of the medium, which influenced the sensitive plate through its envelopes in the darkness.[1] In a dozen cases, with Mme. Darel and Mme. Saxo as mediums, the plates were found to bear special marks, either very light or more deeply marked, which could only be explained, normally, either by original defects in the plates, or accidents in development, or by some localized action on the part of the medium of a nature yet unknown. Such is, at least, the very competent verdict of M. Demole, who took great interest in these photographic experiments. He says in part:

"The photographic plates employed, which were always fresh and carefully examined, came from the house of Lamière and Sons, in Lyons, who long before this had put upon the market sensitive surfaces of all kinds of remarkable purity and of great equality. The spots on these plates after their development, which was effected according to the customary methods . . . *could none of them be attributed to the plates*

[1] This has been observed on several occasions in the case of Eusapia Palladino, and was once seen by us in America (see my brief report in the *Annals of Psychical Science*, April–June, 1910, pp. 314, 315; and Lombroso, *After Death — What?* p. 84, fig. 35). I suppose this is to be accounted for by the supposition of a "free foot," when it has repeatedly been pointed out that even had the medium handled the plate freely these marks could not be accounted for except by supposing that the body of the medium became in some way radioactive during the trance state!—Tr.

themselves, nor to the manipulations of development, and they could only be the result of an action exerted upon the sensitive surface in the darkness by means of the 'fluid' of the medium."

Upon two of these plates the fluid apparently acted in the manner of the X-rays, making impressions upon them according to the degree of protection they received from the wooden shutter of the box. We could perceive rays or parallel bars like fibers, which, however, do not coincide with the grain of the wood. . . . In one case there is a white line, running across the plate from one end to the other, composed of a great number of parallel lines very close to one another, visible only by means of a strong magnifying glass; on the others, there are three very small drawings, which, on enlargement, reveal vaguely a monogram or a cuneiform inscription, which it is impossible to decipher. . . . What is certainly remarkable about these four plates is that these designs are not due to lines formed on the plate, which came out black on the paper, but are apparently formed by deposits of opaque material, which the light could not penetrate. Upon another plate, on the contrary, are to be found two black lines, at right angles, about one centimeter in length, which one would say had been traced upon the plate with a hard point. On another plate are shown two divisions, superimposed one upon the other, as if a ray of light had struck them, and, on reaching the plate, had become more active in one of its parts than in an-

other. Finally, five other plates bore upon them round, dark spots, somewhat resembling those which might be produced in touching a plate with the finger; or granulated vortices, recalling certain plates published by Baraduc (*L'Iconographie en Anses*, Paris, 1896).

To sum up, all these plates seemed to be strongly clouded, as if they had received a luminous impression without the intermediary of the black chamber. Upon some of them, as well as the general mistiness, there had assuredly been deposits of matter, forming opaque spots, or a molecular disaggregation, which, in developing, left a transparent portion; also the fluid acted in two directions, one upon the other. That is all that I can say of these plates from the photographic point of view.

We were not enabled to discover any constant connection between the impressions found upon the plates after their development and the contents of the messages, or the psychic condition of the medium during her contact with the wrapping of the plates. All that we were permitted to infer from these insufficient trials is that the mediumistic practices do not take place without a certain disengagement of forces or influences of a physical character, capable, among other things, of making impressions upon a photographic surface through coverings of wood and of paper absolutely opaque to our eyes. There is nothing here to surprise us when we think of all the radia-

tions, known or unknown, which our organism can emit, and which vary without doubt in intensity and in quality with our mental and emotional states. When we realize that the slightest emotion which crosses the mind, the faintest dreamlike change of some subconscious complex, is sufficient to produce an electric variation, which can be detected by the galvanometer,[1] we can no longer be astonished that psy-

[1] As to these psychogalvanic reflexes, see the recent words of Feraguth, Tarchanof, Summer, Jung, Prince, Peterson, Binswanger, etc., in the *Journal für Psychologie und Neurologie*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie*, etc. These variations in the electric resistance had been explained by the modifications either of the capillary circulation or of the secretion of the sweat-glands in the skin of the hands in contact with the electrodes. The recent researches of Boris Sidis, however, tend to show that the immediate cause of the variations is a muscular phenomenon—"all our experiments prove incontestably that the galvanic phenomenon is due to an electromotive force which is muscular in origin." See Sidis, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. v, pp. 69–74. It is probable that things are more complicated than this, and that many physiological phenomena, still ignored, accompany the processes of motivity and of subconscious ideation. There is here, indeed, a wide field, as yet scarcely surveyed, in which future researchers may end by bringing to light what there is objective and real in the "odic force" of Reichenbach, the "fluid" of the magnetizers, the "neuric force" of Baraduc, the "fluid" of Eusapia, etc. (See, on this subject, among other recent works, the observations and experiences of Boirac, *La Psychologie Inconnue*, and of Tromelin, *Le Fluide Humain*, 1909.) We do not know, moreover, what is yet reserved for us in the study of the phenomena of radioactivity of living organisms. Eusapia Palladino has several times succeeded in discharging an electroscope without contact, as Doctor Imoda repeatedly observed (see his article in the *Annals of Psychical Science*, August–September, 1908). He concludes that "the radiations of radium, the cathodic radiations of the Crookes tube, and mediumistic radiations are fundamentally the same."—TR.

chic perturbations—like the passage from the state of normal wakefulness to the state of automatism and a more or less complete change of personality—should be accompanied by profound physiological modifications, apt to react upon the physical atmosphere of the medium. But it would be going too fast to impute to "spirits" material effects—photographic or other—which the vital processes, still so mysterious, of our own organism, would account for. It will be soon enough when we know exactly what the latter can produce *by themselves;* and we need not attribute the inexplicable residue of physical mediumship to the intervention of the discarnate or to other occult entities.

VIII

SPIRITISM AND SPIRITUALISM [1]

LETTER TO A NEOPHYTE CONVERTED FROM MATERIALISM TO SPIRITISM

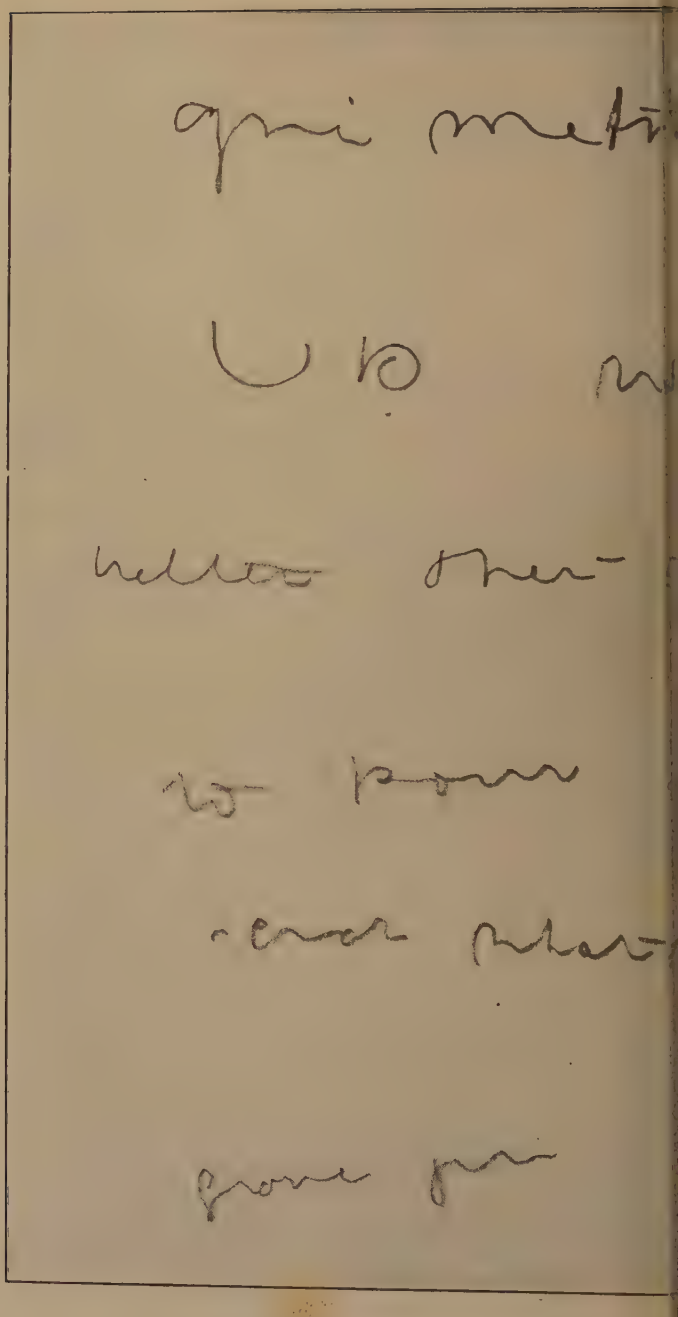
I HAVE been most interested in the narrative you sent me containing an account of your conversion from materialism to spiritism, and I regret that your modesty has prevented you from making it public, even under the veil of anonymity, for it is so vivid a picture of your spiritual evolution, representing in a picturesque and typical manner the experience of many others.

Born and bred in the Roman Catholic Church, you did not long preserve the faith of your childhood—like others of the Protestant orthodoxy! While at college, even, the first teachings of natural history and cosmogony were fatal to them. How you tried to reconcile science and theology; in vain! It was not long

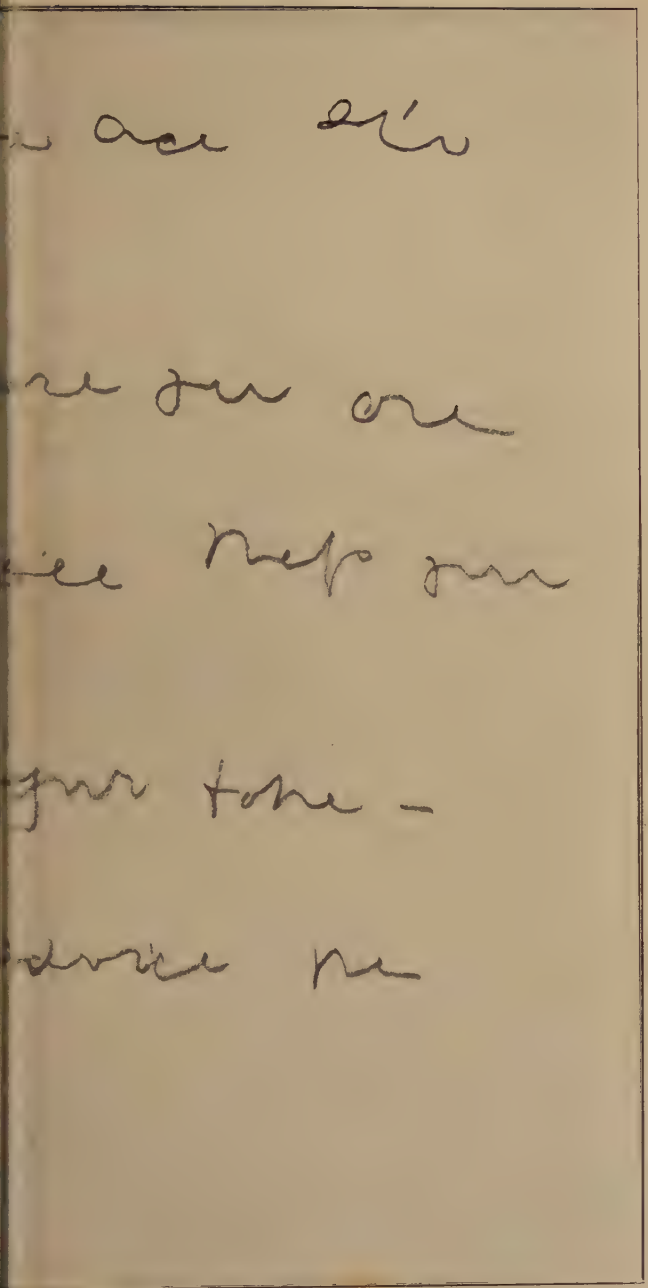
[1] This chapter is written from the purely popular point of view, and without attention to philosophical detail. All metaphysical or religious doctrines are herein divided into two schools, according to whether they do or do not admit personal immortality—philosophy of the *person* and philosophy of the *thing* (materialism, monism, idealism, etc.).

before the latter was completely routed, and science occupied the arena without an opponent. You did not even preserve what is generally called natural religion; belief in God and immortality had disappeared from your soul together with the Christian ideas; and you soon came forward flat-footed for materialism—the result of reading Büchner's *Force and Matter*. From that doctrine—now out of date and virtually given up—you naturally passed to its modern, keener and more subtle equivalent—the evolutionary monism of Haeckel, which remained for you the *ne plus ultra* of human thought . . . until the evening when an event of the most striking and unexpected character occurred in the course of a spiritistic séance to which you had been invited.

There, in a room full of soft, mysterious shadows, seated at a table on which your hands were resting, touching those of your neighbors, you sat incredulous and mocking inwardly at the insipid replies rapped out by the table and solemnly spelled out by the president of the group. There was no doubt in your mind that this was all a stupid sham—some foolish pleasantry of the sitters, when suddenly the idea came to you to make, at all costs, a crucial experiment! In an interval of silence you mentally invoked the revered memory of your father—dead some twenty years, and who certainly had never been known to any one in the circle. And behold, immediately—Oh, unheard-of marvel!—the table responded! Slowly and solemnly it rapped out, letter by letter, to your com-



"DR. HODGSON" WRIT
(Give me time and I'll U. D. [understand] where you are better:



ROUGH MRS. PIPER

I help you to know your father—what advice he gave you.)

plete stupefaction, the name of your father, including one of his Christian names which you had never used and which you had completely forgotten. Then it addressed you in words of touching affection, calling you by the little pet name of old which your father loved to give you when, as a child, you played upon his knee. . . . How your heart beat at that moment! . . . How you blessed the darkness which prevented the others from perceiving your emotion, and what an effort you made to conquer the tone of your voice, affecting the indifferent tone of the merely curious! You came forth from that séance not knowing what to think, shaken in your skepticism and impatient to resume the experience at the next séance. . . .

Almost a year has elapsed since then, and your conversion is an accomplished fact. Without being a medium, properly so-called—in spite of the hope, more than once dashed, of your becoming one—you often obtained by means of the table, at séances with groups you visited, messages from beyond the tomb—not only from your father, but also other departed members of your family, and even from various illustrious personages. At the same time you plunge yourself in spiritistic literature, while constantly experimenting with many mediums. As to Haeckel and Büchner, with all their contemporaries, you now despised them as much as you previously admired them! Like escaping from some infernal jail, you exult in being freed from their atmosphere; and all your being expands in the joy and liberty of the true life

at last discovered! Eternal, grand perspectives open before you—of communion established with your dear ones; of all the spiritual certainties at last reconstructed, not upon the fictitious foundations of effete theology—of a faith full of absurd and revolting dogmas—but upon the unshakable rock of experimental method and scientific demonstration!

You deplore the fact that every one is not on the same vantage ground as yourself. You told me the other day of your great astonishment—mixed with pity and irritation—that after having, like yourself, been present at so many fine séances, and read so many marvelous accounts, I am not yet converted to spiritism, and that, on the other hand, I dare to believe in a future life, and cannot accept annihilation at death. As soon as I reject as fallacious the proofs which are offered of the intervention of the discarnate in our world, annihilation is, you think, the only alternative. In a word, you do not comprehend that one can reject spiritism and preserve at the same time spiritualism as a belief. It is just here, sir, that I should like to enlighten you, by covering, in a more complete manner, certain points which hitherto we have been unable to settle to our mutual satisfaction.

AGAINST SPIRITISM

To begin with, I believe that I have perceived in your conversation that you have already passed your first enthusiasm. You have passed that particular stage in which most novices in spiritism imagine that

they have developed in themselves positive mediumship, and in which, in the ardor of their discovery, they live only for their experiences in writing or at the table, which hold them in bondage and force them to think only of a future existence for days at a time. While you have doubtless had some interesting experiences during the past month, your enthusiasm is somewhat assuaged, so that you will soon be ranked among reasonable spiritists—indeed, I would go so far as to say you are already partially disillusioned. . . . Permit me to analyze rapidly some of the obscure motives which I seem to have seen operative in your case. . . .

There is, in the first place, the fact that you have never obtained an absolute and irreproachable message from the departed. Even those tender communications from your father, which struck you so forcibly at your first séance, and of which you had many more in the later ones—even these so-called proofs of identity, so personal, have on reflection inspired in you some doubts; it appears to you that they *might* have come from yourself. They contain nothing, in substance, which could not have been hidden in your memory; and you sometimes asked yourself, without daring to reply, whether you had not been the dupe of your imagination and the true author of these messages. . . . Examine a little the play of your imagination, study what pathological psychology has taught us as to the facts of the subconscious, dissociated personality, automatism, and the rôle which the emotional complexes play even in our normal life,

and I believe that you will no longer be surprised at what is now but a vague suspicion with you, and that it will become daily a greater and greater certainty.

"But," you reply, "it is always open to hope that minute investigations, such as those of Hyslop, etc., will end by disclosing the presence of the discarnate in the automatisms of mediums—just as chemical analysis has ended by revealing in our atmosphere a new gas hitherto unsuspected. And again, even if the experimental methods never establish the intervention of spirits in our affairs, this would not prove that it had not taken place." . . . But I believe that even if beings or forces from "the other side" do act upon our physical or psychical worlds, science could never *prove* that fact—either because these actions, although considerable, would be too sporadic and capricious to take into account, or because although continuous each one would be so weak that it would remain below the limit which we can measure by instruments or by ourselves. . . .

Secondly, another thing which has deceived you in these spiritistic séances is the melancholy belief that the ensemble of communications received gives us a picture of the mental condition of the discarnate. One does not know whether to laugh or cry at the triviality, the silliness, the incoherence of the greater part of their messages. It is truly a solace for the psychologists to be able to place all these intellectual turpitudes to the credit of an infantile subpersonality of a medium—a kind of puerile regression due to the

passivity of the trance state—rather than to see in them a sign of the condition of the soul after death. You yourself, were you not rather surprised to read, the other day, in a serious review,[1] that Melancthon and Catherine von Bora, the friend and wife of the great reformer Luther, had personally appeared in a séance, and there approved of spiritism in excellent German? What a punishment to have sojourned three centuries and a half on "the other side," and then to return to speak platitudes by the side of the medium Miller! You will excuse me if I prefer to seek the origin of this manifestation in the subconscious dreams of one of the sitters saturated with the history of the Reformation.

Even when the content of these messages is of a high moral order, this excellent characteristic is offset by a sad incoherence, which the spiritists are forced to explain as a momentary delirium, or state of mental aberration, on the part of the communicating spirit. But it can just as well be attributed to the hypnoid ramblings of the medium—this ethico-religious rubbish, this indigestible conglomeration either of Biblical passages, mutilated or repeated *ad nauseam*, or fragments of masonic eloquence, or the rags and tatters of theosophical conferences, or banal long-drawn-out exhortations on charity, on spiritual perfection, etc. And I prefer to consider these automatic utterances the product of the remnants of sermons, and other

[1] Letort, "Les Séances du Médium Miller," *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, 1908, p. 91.

discourses of the like, absorbed by the subconscious mind during periods of distraction rather than believe that they are the discarnate, endeavoring to reveal to us their highest instructions in a state of torpor and confusion truly desolate! You yourself have remarked that the drawings and paintings of mediums in all countries are distinguished by a character soft and veiled, sometimes enigmatic and bizarre; or again they are archaic and childlike, and recall, in certain respects, the work of lunatics; and all this does little credit to the artists on "the other side" if they are not explained as the subconscious productions of the medium.

As for those exceptional cases in which the mediumistic creations reach the acme of their perfection, is one quite sure that these wonders, before which the spiritists go into ecstasy, really surpass the latent powers of the medium or of the sitters? The astonishing poetry, for example, which was given at the famous séances of Marine Terrace,[1] can they lay claim to authorship from the spirit world, or do we not underestimate the genius of Hugo in thinking that he could not subconsciously compose these wonderful phantasies?[2]

[1] See as to these séances of the Hugo family, in Jersey, the three interesting chapters of Jabois, *The Modern Miracle*, Paris, 1907, pp. 106–39.

[2] It will be objected to this explanation, without doubt, that Victor Hugo himself did not touch the stool which was under the hands of his son Charles. But this objection overlooks the fact that there is often at such times a constant telepathic connection between the sitter and the medium. It might be, also, that the

I do not pretend that all these phenomena can be explained by the process of automatic incubation which suddenly reveals genuine latent talents hitherto asleep in subjects who had never suspected themselves before of possessing them. But it is one thing to remember that there are many mysteries in the depths of our natures, and obscurities in the play of our hidden powers, and another to attribute to intrusions from the spirit world all that astonishes us, without even examining the questions of heredity, latent incubation, etc. This is assuredly an unscientific method. You will, I know, agree with me that it is distinctly superfluous to refer to "spirits" phenomena which might be perfectly explained by powers inherent in the medium.

A third characteristic which has contributed to your indifference toward the subject is its unwholesome character, alike from the moral and physiological points of view. Among the majority of spiritistic groups there exists a sort of equivocal religion—a mysticism of a doubtful character. Their meetings begin with a prayer by the president and finish with the jokes of the sitters or the hysterical cries of the medium. At the beginning of the séance the good

author of these poems was Charles Hugo himself, who, in his isolation, and in the semi-trance condition induced by the process of typtology, awoke some hereditary power of versifying during the period of waiting and expectancy. In proof of this see the linguistic aptitude which Mlle. Smith showed in her trance condition, but which she entirely lacked in her normal state. (*From India to the Planet Mars.*)

spirits, which piously admonish the sitters, soon give place to the joking of evil spirits. It is certain that, under cover of psychic studies and so-called "scientific experiments," too often the habitués of circles come to seek the marvelous, the occult, the supernatural, the rare sensations and the little delicious thrills which they experience at the expectation of seeing the unknown or of direct contact with another world!

You will reply that I speak of groups, unfortunately too numerous, which only investigate spiritism for amusement, and that with those in serious and convinced circles it is another thing. Alas, yes, it is another thing, and very bad it is from the point of view of physical and mental health! For where the experiences are of a gay nature, there is at least a hygienic relaxation from the high interior tension, for which laughter is the logical outlet. It wakes the consciousness to a sense of wholesome reality, and puts an end to the automatism, recalling the individual to himself. But in the serious séances, where this safety-valve is wanting, there is nothing to oppose the mental disintegration of the medium, and also of the sitters, however little they may be predisposed to it. In circles there are hardly ever lacking temperaments attracted by the occult—moths which fly into the flame that consumes them. You have told me yourself how, after the best séances, you felt nervous and excited, and that this was followed by insomnia, strange impressions, commencements of hallucinations, involuntary movements, etc.—although *you* are

not what is called a neuropath. Think, then, of those who *are*, or, again, of the sensitive natures of young girls, or those young people whose stupid parents have forced them to perform automatic writing, table-tipping, etc., in the family circle, from which they suffer all their lives, in a form of mental disequilibrium more or less pronounced. And to give you an idea of the ravages due to practical spiritism, consult a few of the annals of medicine.[1] Think also of the numerous cases which never come to light, but which on that account, make no less unhappiness in the family—who have forced upon them all the more strongly the phrase of M. Jules Bois: "The imprudent who run after the spirits, lose their own spirit."[2]

When I drew your attention to the fatal consequences of spiritism you replied to me that they are much exaggerated, the alienists having, according to you, a mania for seeing insanity in all that lies beyond the ordinary. It is enough for them that some psychological phenomena go beyond the ordinary teachings of materialism to be treated by them as hallucinations or systematized insanity. I recognize that psychiatry, like every other science, can be limited and prejudiced when intuitive comprehension is lacking in the practitioner. But we must not exaggerate here. There are alienists, it is true, who

[1] See, among other works, Violet, *Spiritism and Insanity*, London, 1910; *Ueber die Beziehungen zwischen Spiritismus und Geistesstörung*, Berlin, 1902; Dr. C. Williams, *Spiritualism and Insanity*, London, 1910, etc.

[2] *The Modern Miracle*, p. 401.

are ignorant enough of all that happens outside their regular practice to declare that all mediums are paranoiacs and the doctrine of spiritism an insane delusion. It is possible. But these examples of ignorance are to-day more and more rare, and from them one ought not to judge other practitioners, better qualified to appreciate the anomalies of the human mind. I could mention to you several psychiatrists who do not believe that the spiritistic doctrine in itself constitutes any symptom of insanity; but they only insist the more strongly upon the dangers which it offers for morbid temperaments and weak or superstitious minds which are inclined to give a spiritistic interpretation and a supernatural value to all obscure phenomena, or to seek revelations from "the other side" by those practices which threaten mental dissociation.

Doctor Violet, for example, one of the most recent authors on this subject, believes that it is impossible to declare the spiritistic doctrine an insanity, since we must consider it merely as one of many human opinions. But on the other hand it constitutes, he thinks, a vast "culture-bouillon" for all the errors, all the want of equilibrium, which ultimately lead to insanity.[1]

This judgment of the learned alienist is supported by a detailed study of the spiritistic insanities, which cannot be too strongly recommended to all exponents of spiritism.

[1] Violet, *Spiritism and Insanity.*

On the other hand, you may reply that, so far from denying these pernicious effects of spiritism, you have told me that the spiritists themselves have been the first to point them out, but that the novices have not, until too late, paid any attention to these warnings, given them by the older spiritists. These mental troubles spiritism attributes to the "obsession" or "possession" of inexperienced and imprudent mediums by bad spirits, of which space is full. And as the shades of Homer revivified themselves by drinking the blood of the sacrifices, so the evil and inferior spirits, in quest of adventure, rove about spiritistic groups, ready to seize upon the organisms of subjects of a delicate constitution and of little vital resistance. And it is thus that even the dangers of spiritism prove its truth! However, your simple good sense and the analysis of some examples have already shown you that very often these wicked spirits do not come from "the other side," but that they sleep in ourselves. They are our inferior impulses, our atavic instincts, our fears or our remorses, our crazy ideas, our suppressed emotions, all those hordes of undisciplined elements, normally held in check and driven back into the shadowy background of our being by the supremacy of the conscious "ego"—these suddenly usurp the supremacy when the latter abdicates, so that instead of proving the interference of evil spirits, it is really this internal mob of wild thoughts and emotions which the medium has released and allowed to exercise free play. The idea that it is so in *all* cases of mental

disturbance due to spiritism is assuredly only a hypothesis, like all generalizations from particular facts, but a hypothesis which psychopathological observations confirm each day more and more, and which prove, on the contrary, that "bad spirits" or "demons" do not assail the medium from without.

I need not tell you that these unwholesome aspects of spiritism scarcely predispose me in its favor or give me the desire to become a spiritist! . . .

But, according to you, all the preceding considerations—the puerility of the messages (which hardly allow one to think, much less desire, them to be the work of the discarnate), their usual explicability by purely psychological laws and processes, and the dangers of mediumistic practices, all of which might well teach us prudence with regard to the interpretation of the facts, and to justify the aversion which so many spiritists themselves feel as to the outcome of the séances and of the phenomena—all this does not prove that we are enabled to go beyond the spiritistic hypothesis when one considers the ensemble of the facts observed. For if the greater part of the mediumistic manifestations—perhaps all, taken separately and in particular—remain an uncertain authority, that does not, you will say, dispose of the contention that the intervention of the discarnate may none the less be an absolute certainty; and this is shown by the presence of two facts otherwise inexplicable. These are (1) that the intelligences sending these messages invariably

assert that they *are* spirits of the departed, and (2) the oftentimes supernormal character of the contents of the messages.

Permit me to examine these two arguments, each in turn, a little more fully.

1. I do not ignore the fact that spiritists have often invoked in support of their thesis the fact that everywhere and always the mediumistic communications pretend to proceed from the spirit world. According to them, this constancy of statement could not be explained if it corresponded to no external reality, for it is inconceivable that our subconscious minds could ceaselessly clothe themselves in the semblance of the departed, and claim to be there, when as a matter of fact they were never there in reality at all! And you quoted to me, in support of this, the very competent authority of M. Denis, the great apostle of French spiritism, which refutes this psychological theory of subconscious activity in the following fashion:[1]

"It might well be asked by virtue of what universal agreement these subconscious complexes in man, which are ignored by him and which mutually ignore one another, are unanimous . . . in calling themselves the spirits of the dead. . . . This is at least what we have been able to prove and establish in the innumerable experiments in which we have taken part during the past thirty years in so many different parts of France and abroad. . . . Nowhere are the invisible beings represented as being subconscious complexes,

[1] L. Denis, *Christianisme et Spiritisme*, Paris, 1898, pp. 261, 262.

or superior egos of the medium, or of other persons present, but always as different personalities enjoying the fullness of consciousness and as free individuals who have already lived on earth." [1]

But, despite the authority of M. Denis, it seems to me necessary to make a distinction between the personal character of the communication and its attribution to the defunct. It is true that this mysterious being always states (of itself or when questioned) that it is *some one*[2] who speaks of himself in the first person singular, or in the plural, but it is not true that this "some one" asserts invariably that he is a spirit of the dead; for, in numbers of cases, it affirms itself to be an angel or a demon when not the devil or God himself,[3] or an individual still living on earth; or, again, *pace* M. Denis, the second ego of the medium. As to the first of these illustrations, you will find plenty of cases in the history of possession, in all times and in all countries—cases of demon possession in theomania, etc. But allow me to give you an example of one of the two latter categories, certainly less frequent.

Here is an incident which happened in a spiritistic group in our own town, and which was reported to me by an eye-witness:

[1] This is also the attitude taken by Prof. Alfred Russel Wallace, in his *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.—TR.

[2] Which is not astonishing if this source is the medium himself, for how could the latter imagine himself in his rôle as an *im*personal being?

[3] As happened in several cases collected by myself. See also the unabridged French edition, Cases 247 and 249, pp. 113, 114, and Case 313, p. 152, etc.—TR.

We had one day a very odd communication. The table spelled out: "My name commences with X and finishes with X." "Ah!" we said, "this is a joker; there cannot be a name both beginning and ending with an X." But my surprise was extreme when the table, continuing its typtological response, spelled out, Xavier Chanaux. This was the name of an old professor of music of my childhood, whom I had lost sight of for at least six years. I asked: "Is that indeed you, M. Chanaux? When did you die?" The table responded, "I am not dead!" Then followed a sentence in which M. Chanaux recalled that he had taken part in an international conference of music which took place in Geneva, etc. I have since ascertained that M. Chanaux was not dead at the moment when this communication was received. I was not thinking in the least of M. Chanaux when this message was given. But I always had the impression that Mlle. Dyck, who was fond of music, and who had with her the programme of music being given in Geneva, and who had at least gone through it, and knew that I was born at Dôle, had subconsciously noted the name of M. Chanaux, professor of music at Dôle, and director of the musical society which had taken part in the conference."

It is thus quite possible that the subconscious imaginings of the medium, or of the sitters, can occasion messages not only from the dead, but from the living. . . .

You see, then, that M. Denis is wrong when he says that the authors of mediumistic memories are unanimous in saying that they are spirits of the dead. It is true that this is generally the case, but there is nothing astonishing in that, since this is the result of the atmosphere at spiritistic circles, where the medium and his sitters are always more or less saturated with the idea and the expectation of seeing the dead manifest. Suggestion and auto-suggestion, in short, suffice to explain the nature of these communications, and if M. Denis, in the course of his thirty years of experiments, has never seen an exception, that proves simply the contagious power of his conviction in the séances when he was present, which will not surprise any one who knows his sympathetic personality.

Among the neurologists, an attempt has recently been made to give a psycho-physiological explanation of this remarkable fact—that the subconsciousness of the medium should, on occasion, pretend to be a spirit of the dead. Messrs. Sidis and Goodhart attribute this peculiarity to the structure of our nervous centers —to neurons, relatively independent, whose relations are purely functional, and which are extremely mobile and variable, constituting momentary systems always liable to be disorganized and to form new groups, co-existent with a more stable grouping, which serves as the physiological basis for the normal ego. From the psychical point of view, these unstable groupings constitute temporary personalities, which have a great liking for imitation and play; they give themselves

names, and simulate people who have died. Because of this childlike deception, they disclose the fact that they are not mature personalities, living and real, but that they have a sort of reality of their own, nevertheless. By placing themselves in another world than ours—in the world of discarnate spirits—the personalities of the trance reveal their true nature—as unreal beings, ephemeral, simple candidates for existence.[1]

Like all anatomico-physiological statements of the facts of consciousness, this ingenious theory has the advantage of furnishing us a sort of visual symbol of what occurs, in terms of associating and dissociating neurons; but it has also the inevitable fault of telling us nothing new as to the psychological phenomena themselves, and of giving us no explanation, properly so called. In particular, one does not see why these personalities, so unstable and ephemeral, do not ever betray their condition in the least and show themselves to be the simple reflection of something else, etc. In short, it seems far more natural to me to attribute to the suggestions of the circle and the latent complexes of the medium these somnambulistic creations claiming to be discarnate spirits. . . .

Let us now turn to the *content* of the messages, so often supernormal, and which, in your eyes, prove the intervention of spirits. I do not contest the fact that, after the elimination of what is only supernormal in

[1] Sidis and Goodhart. *Multiple Personality*, New York, 1905, p. 54. This is a summary of their views, and not an exact quotation.—Tr.

appearance [1]—cases of mal-observation, subconscious imagination, etc. — there remain many phenomena which are absolutely inexplicable by any of the principles of science as taught in our schools to-day. But all this does not admit the presence of the discarnate; and, in such a case as this, we cannot afford to take a wrong road, and attribute at once to "spirits" all the facts which are at present beyond our scientific knowledge and power of explanation. These problems are, it is true, far from being solved. Perhaps metapsychics will end by giving its adhesion to the spiritistic doctrine. Possibly. I am, however, struck by two points which hardly tell in favor of this ultimate verdict.

In the first place, supernormal manifestations often seem to quicken into being powers which, though mysterious, still belong to living people, and which become apparent in certain peculiar conditions of mind and body; so that we should have here no need of calling upon the discarnate to produce these phenomena. Telepathy, exteriorization of motivity, materializations, clairvoyance, lucidity, etc.—all these phenomena seem to be produced by powers still inherent in our own being—though only noticeable

[1] As a good example of what appears to be supernormal, and is afterward shown to be trickery, take the case of the horse Hans, which created such a stir some years ago, and which was only explained by the ingenuity of Professor Stumpf. For a more detailed explanation of the methods employed in teaching animals to perform their tricks, see my article in the *Scientific American*. —Tr.

to any degree in certain individuals, and in them only under certain psycho-physiological conditions (secondary states of consciousness, somnambulism, etc.). Of course this does not exclude the possibility that the spirits of the dead also employ these same devices; but if that is the case, it becomes increasingly difficult to prove their existence. In other words, before daring to give a verdict in favor of the discarnate, much more must be known as to the foundation and groundwork of our own constitution, with all its resources and endless possibilities. . . .

The second point which causes me to hesitate in accepting spiritism is that the majority of savants who have studied the subject the most minutely seem to recede more and more from the spiritistic interpretation of the facts the further they proceed in their investigations.[1] Read, for example, the last utterance on this subject of Prof. William James,[2] where he stated that, after investigating the subject for more than twenty-five years, he was still "on the fence" with regard to the spiritistic interpretation of these facts.

[1] I do not think this remark of Professor Flournoy can be sustained. In proof of this, I may point out that Doctor Hodgson only became convinced of the reality of the spiritistic hypothesis after working for years with Mrs. Piper, and Professor Hyslop was slowly but surely converted in the same way. Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Dr. A. R. Wallace, Mr. Myers, and many other men of like standing were only converted after years of research.—TR.

[2] William James, "The Confidences of a Psychical Researcher," *American Magazine*, 1909, pp. 580–589.

While insisting strongly upon the necessity of pursuing the study of the supernormal, and while assured that in this realm there are many facts still unexplained, . . . Professor James concludes that he can accept neither the spiritistic nor the orthodox scientific hypothesis (which denies to these facts all objective value or existence), and that he can only await the evidence of new facts. You will not, I am sure, challenge the competence and impartiality of this learned professor; he has, indeed, so little against the spiritistic hypothesis that he has often been imprudently quoted in its support by their authorities.

But perhaps you will tell me that conclusions of Professor James are only his personal opinions, and opposed to them are the opinions of other savants equally well known—such as Lombroso, Lodge, Hyslop, etc. But if the spiritistic hypothesis rests on such uncertain ground—there being so great a diversity of opinion among the best-qualified investigators—it proves at least that this theory is far from being proved or universally accepted. . . .

But all other considerations apart, it is obvious that the final belief in spiritism, based as it is upon scientific evidence, so called, is, after all, an act of faith, like any other belief — since this theory is selected from among many other hypotheses also advanced to explain the facts. That is why spiritism, even if proved, would not differ fundamentally from any other philosophical or religious belief, since at heart it is an act of faith, after all! When all has been *proved*,

we must *believe*. And this brings me to the second point of my letter.

FOR SPIRITUALISM

Let us now consider your second argument—your amazement that reasonable people can still believe in a future life when they have rejected, as "non-proven," the demonstrations which spiritism appears to have given them.

This position seems to you untenable. For you there is no middle course; when one has been emancipated from blind submission to the dogmatic teachings of the clergy, nothing is left but to follow implicitly the teachings of science, and this can only lead, according to you, to monism or spiritism! That it might be neither the one nor the other never seems to have occurred to you; that there might be beyond all this a domain of belief in which philosophy and religion can have free play appears incredible to you. This is hardly surprising after your long training in Büchner and Haeckel, who have never learned to distinguish between what belongs to science and experimental verification and what relates to personal faith. They made you believe that their "monism" was scientifically and experimentally demonstrated, until the day when the rappings of a table forced you to believe that its refutation was complete, but also scientific and experimental!

This desire—I should almost say this mania—for experimental and scientific demonstration is certainly

praiseworthy in itself; and we may be thankful that this characteristic is being spread widely throughout all classes of society. . . .

But, after we have reached the end of all that positive science can teach us, we are always face to face with the fundamental enigmas of the universe, which they are powerless to explain—the existence of thought and the world, the origin and nature of life, the problem of good and evil, etc. When considering them we always encounter two opposing types of philosophies, which Renouvier has so well termed the philosophies of the *person* and the philosophies of the *thing*. In the former the most important and real elements are the conscious subject and its significance, eventually accepting the doctrine of personal immortality as its rational outcome and the only logical consequence of a moral order. In the latter all this is pure sentimentality and fundamentally untrue.

The type *par excellence* of the latter is *monism*, which you already know, and to which you for long gave your adhesion (and I also at times, when reading some of its most brilliant exponents, from Spinoza to Hartmann, feeling sometimes the charm of their imagination), whatever its particular *nuance*—materialistic, idealistic, etc.—and by whatever name it designates its absolute idol—Substance, Force, Nature, Cosmic Energy, The Idea, The Unconscious, The Will to Live, The Absolute, The Unknowable, The Eternal Axiom, etc. There is grandeur, majesty, in this doctrine, that all the apparent multiplicity of the

universe is found, at basis, to be essentially *one;* and we experience a sort of mysterious fascination in the presence of the sublime immensity of this *thing* which unrolls itself ceaselessly, without end and without beginning, in the infinity of space and time—the avatars of its protoform mass; a sort of metaphysical protoplasm, engendering and reabsorbing alternately, with a blind and implacable necessity, all finite beings and their ephemeral attributes—the atoms and nebulæ, bodies and consciousnesses, joys and sorrows, loves and hates. . . . The spectacle of this eternal evolution—where everything is becoming and nothing persists—rocks you and cradles you with the magic rhythm of the ocean, whose billows each in turn become individualized and scintillate a moment in the light of day, only to be engulfed a moment later in the obscure abyss of the Sublime All. It is splendid!

Only this thought finishes by irritating you or giving you nausea! It has never affected me in this way. In trying to appreciate the view-point of this philosophy I have felt the true value of our individual being vanish, as well as all other values of which it is the necessary pivot. All the interest which attaches to this world, all the motives and reasons for life, the explanation of which our philosophic systems have for their aim and end, vanish also. For the thing or the substance of monism is assuredly eternal —if the persons which it brings forth are not so; the joys by which they are illusioned one moment must be equally obliterated into nothingness. I do not under-

stand, indeed, how any values whatever, whether they be inferior values, and purely economic, from the material point of view, or the more spiritual values of truth and beauty, or the supreme social values of justice and love—I cannot understand how these can subsist in the abstract or impersonal form after the extinction of individual consciousness, alone capable of feeling and of appreciating them. . . .

I know well enough that the apostles of monism make praiseworthy efforts to preserve the culture of the ideal. Haeckel, for example, after having condemned "athanatism" (as he calls the belief in immortality), detailing with complaisance all the vices which he discovers in a future life, even to the discomfiture which there would be for many in finding themselves "eternally by the side of their better half, or their mother-in-law"—Haeckel does not hesitate to make sport of the eloquence of the pulpit, and to hold forth upon the Trinity of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful — unctuous and touching homilies! But what would you? For these edifying discourses not to sound hollow in my ears I must forget the famous substance which gives birth to the most noble heroes as easily as the most degraded criminals, and swallows them up the moment after with equal indifference!

For those who have already seen the tomb close over their dearest one—annihilating at one blow this prize without value, the crown, the reason of being, the end and aim of all other values—how ridiculous to them the religion and the moral teachings of the mon-

ists must appear; how lugubriously cynical! For if there is one thing which we are not allowed to expect from their impersonal substance it is assuredly *pity*—that pity of which Pierre Loti spoke recently: ". . . A supreme pity toward which are flung at the final hour of parting the cries for mercy, for forgiveness; a pity capable of granting us even this reunion, without which conscious life, and love in the infinite sense of that word, would only be a cruelty too wicked and imbecile for words."

It is true that neither love "in the infinite sense of that word" nor the desire for reunion appears to torment the monists, to judge by the consolations they offer to souls in trouble. . . .

If the loss of those who are dear to you afflicts you to this point, listen to what one of the most illustrious monists says on the subject: "It is your fault; you must not love so much! The most simple means of guarding yourself against such sorrows, and of living happily, is to avoid feelings which are too tender and too exclusive. Scatter your affections among a circle of people large enough to prevent your perceiving any loss caused by death." What a pity that all the world cannot arrive at this height of depersonalization! "I loved him," said Montaigne, weeping for his friend, La Boétie, "because he was himself and I was myself." What would *he* have replied to one who reproached him for having concentrated his friendship instead of scattering it over all his acquaintances?

Elsewhere the old materialistic monists ask us:

"Why do you complain like children who find that their bread is not buttered enough? Is it not sufficient that you survive in the only way which nature assures you—in the indestructible atoms of which you are constituted, and which will re-enter into the eternal circulation of life by the indefinite repercussion of our least acts on our material and social environment, by the memory which we leave to our friends and to posterity (as long as they do not forget you)?

There are perhaps those to whom the vision of having their statue erected in a public place would suffice for the loss of all they have lost and loved. So much the better for them! . . .

"But can you not understand," continue these subtle dialecticians, "that eternity and immortality are even now at your disposal? For these terms are far from signifying, as a vain people think, an impossible survival beyond the tomb, but simply a certain quality of present life. The other life ought not to be symbolized by a mere prolongation of itself upon a line of time, but by a dimension perpendicular to this line. To lose one's self in the cult of art or of science is to become altruistic; to devote one's self to some great cause or sublime ideal—in short, to give to one's existence a content of infinite value—*that* is really to possess life eternal and to participate in immortality."

There are here some noble thoughts, to which I fully subscribe. But I confess myself as not agreeing with this quintessence of idealism, which grants us eternity and immortality in a metaphorical sense, implying

their negation in the ordinary sense; for I do not see how to avoid the eternal "All is vanity," of Ecclesiastes, if individual consciousness—even the richest in value—cannot escape the final nothingness.

Finally, as if they themselves felt the inanity of their dissertations in the face of the brutal fact of death and experienced the need of some compensation more concrete and living, all monists strive to divert our attention from ourselves, and direct them upon future generations, who will receive the benefit of our efforts, of our griefs, of our sacrifices. They do not doubt that this grand perspective of the progress of the human race, marching toward perfection, will replace in time, and with advantage, the selfish and pitiful faith of the coal-heaver in individual future life. They assure us, indeed, that our most distant descendants will one day realize this ideal of beauty, truth, and goodness which now passes above our heads, and will enter into this land of promise to which we are refused! If we were to accept this prediction it would require, it seems to me, a faith more robust and simple than that of the coal-heaver to imagine that the workings of adaptation would become weaker instead of stronger with the growing complexity of the condition of life on this planet. . . .

But to all this I foresee your reply. "It is very good, although a trifle banal," you say to me, "to show us that the immortality of the soul would be a desirable thing, indispensable to give to life a moral significance, satisfying and ennobling, by this per-

spective of eternal progress. Every one—save Haeckel and his disciples—agrees on this point, and subscribes to the words of Renan—that a man who believes in a future life is worth more than the man who does not. But this is not the question. The thing is whether the belief is true or illusory. Monism demonstrates that it is illusory, consciousness being only the function of the cerebral cortex—an epiphenomenon without reality in itself, a simple reflection of nervous vibratory changes, or, as Doctor Forel expresses it, "the subjective mirroring of the neurokymes," [1] and this necessarily becomes extinct with the destruction of the brain. All the speculations of the metaphysicians and theologians could not prevail against this argument of fact; there is only the experimental evidence of another *fact*—the intervention of the discarnate—which would prove that consciousness survives the death of the organism. Now, it is exactly this proof which spiritism gives us, and assures us the future life. It alone responds to this double demand of our being: on one side, the eternal cry of the heart, which demands something else than a world where everything perishes, and in which love is always conquered by death; and, on the other side, the absolute need of scientific certainty. While your philosophico-religious spiritualism seeks to satisfy the first of these needs, it confesses itself incapable of responding to the second, and is only an antiquated argument, proved

[1] See Forel, *Hypnotism*, chap. i, "Consciousness and the Hypothesis of Identity," pp. 1–36.—Tr.

powerless to wrestle with monism, which has a highly scientific character and the support of physiology. Once more, it is only spiritistic phenomena which are capable of silencing the monists and giving us the certainty of the future life; so that one may affirm that, *outside spiritism, there is no salvation for spiritualism.*"

I should reply to this that I do not recognize the scientific character of monism any more than I do that of spiritism. As to the latter, I have already explained my attitude in the first part of this letter. As to monism, permit me to say a few words on this subject, since you appear to be still very impressed by it.

Against the So-called "Scientific" Character of Monism

Understand thoroughly, then, that I do not share the metaphysical views of the monists. . . . What I criticize them for is their constant confusion of science with metaphysics, and of their abuse of the ordinary ignorance of the masses, by making them believe that *their* doctrine is the only legitimate one, from the scientific point of view, when as a matter of fact it is only a tissue of contradictions. Here are a few specimens of their reasoning on the relations of brain and consciousness:

1. In saying that consciousness, *as such*, is a cerebral function, and exercises no influence upon the organism, monism finds itself opposed to the biological principle that all function has its use in the struggle for existence, and that a function or an organ which is useless tends to atrophy and to disappear. If the facts

of consciousness, *as such*, have no effect upon the conduct of the individual, they would never have appeared; or, once having appeared by spontaneous variation, they would have been promptly extinguished by non-usage, which is contrary to our observations, and which shows us that they are constantly being developed and becoming more complex in the course of evolution.

2. Physiology, which aims to represent and explain mechanically the processes which go on in the body, has a perfect right to treat the phenomena of consciousness as epiphenomena, of which it need take no account, for all our sciences are obliged to limit themselves to a special point of view, a restricted portion of the total of experience, and to ignore the rest as if it did not exist. But monism, in elevating to the place of supreme importance the physiological equivalent, and in saying that the facts of consciousness have no reality in themselves, or that psychology belongs to cerebral physiology, sets itself in opposition to science in general, which ought not to neglect any fact whatever. It is exactly as if a geometrician endeavored to impose idealism upon us, or to condemn physics, under the pretext that solidity, weight, and all the material properties of the body are non-existent things for geometry. What more anti-scientific than this narrowness of mind, which understands nothing outside its specialty, and which proclaims as truths these amateur metaphysical speculations?

3. The monists, in order to invest their doctrine

with further credit, repeat constantly that science is necessarily monistic, since it aims at unity. And to think that there are people who can repeat such sophisms! For what relation is there between the unity of substance as postulated by monism, and the formal unity—the systematization and co-ordination—which science is obliged to introduce into the multiplicity of facts? In reality science is as pluralistic as monistic, unless we employ a certain terminology specially constructed to fit the facts. Science employs analysis as much as synthesis, and displays the *qualitative* variety of things as much as their *quantitative* relations; and, in the unity of physical forces—the greatest discovery of the past century—the variety and multiformity of these forces is as certain as their unity.

As to the grand doctrine of energetics of Ostwald, which is the last cry of so-called "scientific" monism, it is only by playing with the ambiguity of the word Energy (taken without qualification) that they have succeeded in making consciousness, as such, a part of their system. As to the dualism of the mental and physical facts, which we have not yet been able to reduce or to transform into each other, they tell us the first is a manifestation of cerebral energy, the second a manifestation of mental energy, both being manifestations of Energy proper—as are heat, light, electricity, etc.; and in consequence they are transformed one into the other, as are these latter—that is to say, a certain quantity of the one disappears when the other appears. What could be more simple and

more evident? I have nothing against this ingenious reasoning (except its unintelligibility to my obtuse intellect), and I should be delighted to learn that the energy of the physico-spacial world suffers momentary loss every time that I am conscious of anything; but, far from such an idea being "demonstrated," it appears to me absolutely contrary to all the teachings of experience.

In fact, one might say that positive science is not monistic nor dualistic, but rather *triadistic*. For, outside consciousness, savants declare that life is as irreducible as matter.[1] As the monists consider these three things diverse manifestations of their Substance and Energy—which they are entitled to, from the point of view of metaphysics—they have yet to prove that this conception has any value or utility whatever for science.

4. As for the particular science of man, physiological psychology, so far from being monistic, is radically dualistic throughout. And this is a dualism not simply metaphysical, which affirms two substances, but a truly scientific and experimental dualism, which admits two series of irreducible facts—the corporeal or physiological and the mental or psychological series. For metaphysics, the traditional theory of two substances (matter and spirit) in intimate reciprocal action to each other—in spite of the amusing contempt and terror which it inspires in so many savants

[1] See, among others, Arrhenius, *Worlds in the Making*, New York, chap. viii, and Lodge, *Life and Matter*, New York.—Tr.

—is infinitely more simple, when one considers it, than monism; it is more in conformity with the facts of experience, more scientific, in a word, than monism, which identifies everything, confuses everything, confounds everything.

But science has nothing to do with metaphysics. Some day the theory will have to be abandoned that psycho-physiology is necessarily monistic, but rather that it is dualistic—so much so that even the most fanatic defenders of monism cannot fail to recognize dualism in practical experience, a contradiction which confers a certain piquancy to their works.

Here is one proof, among many. Take the recent volume of Forel,[1] one of the most brilliant of the contemporary monists, and compare the Preface (p. 1) with chapter iii, *passim*. In the first lines of the Preface, *the metaphysician* affirms that the mind and the activity of the brain are one and the same thing, and severely criticizes those people who "do not dare to look facts in the face," as well as those who "form their judgment upon authority," all those people who say that "the inter-relation of consciousness and brain is a metaphysical and insoluble question," and who wish to "construct the science of man upon an equivocation called psycho-physical parallelism." Good! Turn over some pages, and you will see the *savant* this time fall into this double heresy which he has just condemned! When *he* begins to "look facts in the face," he finds himself obliged to admit: First,

[1] *L'Ame et le Système Nerveux*, Paris, 1906.

that the direct reduction of a state of consciousness to a "neurokyme" (nervous impulse), or the reverse, is "an impossibility"; better still, it is "a transcendental question—situated beyond the knowledge of man." It seems to me that Forel here defends exactly what he has been so severely criticizing all the time. Secondly, when he says that "in all psychic manifestation there corresponds a neurokymic activity in the neurones of our brain," I do not see that he differs from the psycho-physical parallelism which M. Forel treated as a mere "equivocation" when formulated by others!

A few pages further on you will find again the metaphysical speculations which blind the savants. In his desire to escape the pernicious influence of a mystic dualism between body and soul, he turns his back to facts of experience, and under the name of "scientific monism" admits "the supposition that they are the same realities, which appear to us psychologically as mind and physiologically as neurokymes." And he finds support in Fechner,[1] the founder of psycho-physiology, forgetting that the latter never put forward his *philosophical* monism as a *scientific* doctrine. As the metaphysician and the scientist continue this opposition throughout Forel's works, let us note that "as the mind and the neurokyme are

[1] Fechner was essentially spiritualistic, for he admitted personal immortality, which he defended with conviction in the greater part of his works; see, among others, *The Little Book of Life After Death*, Boston, 1904, and his *Die Drei Motive und Gründe des Glaubens*, Leipsic, 1863.

inseparable from each other" in our experience, the author concludes that it is necessary to speak of their complete identity, and not of their parallelism, since "one and the same thing cannot be parallel with itself." Evidently; but it has not the appearance of being parallel with itself; and against it we might place another phrase, also "self-evident": that two irreducible things forever different (as he has declared consciousness and the nervous changes to be) cannot be one and the same thing! We might as well say that the blind man and his dog are one and the same thing, since one is never seen without the other. From all this tissue of contradictions I draw one conclusion: it is that the hidden metaphysical identity which the monistic doctrine affirms does not exist. It is clear, in fact, that if we could scientifically identify or reduce to a common basis the mental series and the physical series, we would not easily plunge into this mystery of the "unity with two faces." [1]

When Doctor Forel, in order to explain to us the nature of the connection of brain and consciousness, tells us that the phenomena of consciousness are produced by the "subjective mirroring" — the *Selbstspiegelung*, the introspection of the neurokymes—there is perhaps here a profound metaphysical conception,

[1] The best solution of this enigma is not found in monism, which identifies consciousness with the brain, but in pan-psychism, which converts the latter into the former; yet even here there are many difficulties! See Strong, *Why the Mind has a Body*, New York, 1903; also Flournoy, "Sur le Pan-psychisme," etc., *Arch. de Psychol.*, vol. iv, p. 129; and the reply of Strong, *id.*, p. 145.

which I would believe on his word—were it not that it is contrary to the facts of experience. When a negro regards himself in a mirror, he usually perceives the head of a negro, and not a firework or a snow-man—for if he did, he would be correct in thinking himself "bewitched." Let it be explained to us, then, by means of what witchery our neurokymes, in introspecting or mirroring themselves, perceive trees, houses, people, fields of the microscope, as well as griefs, passions, scientific or metaphysical theories, etc.—in short, everything in the world of thought except the neurokymes themselves! . . .

This contradiction within the monistic theory is so striking, and the idea of a nervous wave mirroring itself and reflecting itself upon itself is such nonsense, that we ask how it is that distinguished savants can subscribe to such absurdities. The only explanation is that to them monism is not only an intellectual belief, but a *faith*—a dogma excluding all reflection—a religion which has taken the place of that with which they were saturated and disgusted in childhood. Thus looked at in the face, this doctrine is no more "respectable" than any other sincere belief, and I should not think of criticizing it in this manner if it were not for the fact that it tries to pass itself off as "scientific."

I could easily multiply examples of difficulties and objections which one finds in monism, when one raises it from the domain of metaphysics into that of positive facts. But the preceding specimens will suffice, I

think, to convince you that its reputation as a philosophy is ill-founded; nor is monism scientific. . . .

There remain, however, to the monist two arguments which will always assure him a certain success in the competition of rival philosophical systems. On the one side, the *aplomb* with which he adorns his writings with scientific phraseology, to which it has no title, but which is successful in impressing the masses. On the other side, it responds to certain psychological needs, and thus presents certain real advantages—*viz.*, the satisfaction given our intellectual mania for simplification and for unity at all costs, because the multiple and the multiplex fatigue us;[1] the esthetic charms us, and we long for the gentle cradling, the species of mystic ecstasy which one experiences in contemplating Substance, the Absolute—necessary, unique, infinite, in pantheistic religions. . . .

Some Characteristics of Spiritualism

One must distinguish between the spiritualistic conviction of life eternal and the spiritistic belief in survival; for there are notable differences—the greatest being their psychological nature and their origin.

For the spiritists, survival is a matter of positive knowledge, experimentally proved by facts which all the world can easily control; its admission does not allow any personal choice, but is based upon observation of phenomena which necessitate its acceptance

[1] That is, the "tender minds," as Professor James called them in his *Pragmatism*, as opposed to the "tough minds."—Tr.

whether one wills it or not, with the same evidence and the same certainty that all other scientific verities are established. For spiritualism, on the contrary, the cry of life eternal is a protest of the emotional nature which demands a continuance of life, and is a sort of defiance of the present order of things. This protestation—based upon considerations of value wholly foreign to science—constitutes a veritable act of faith, even of religious faith, if one admits, with Hoffding, that the essence of religion consists in a reaction within the interior being against the apparent iniquity of the course of things and an effort to safeguard the supreme good which might be condemned, from the point of view of empirical reality.

When facts crush us, when common observation, as the inductions of science seem to show us, proves that conscious life—and with it all the values of which it is the indispensable factor—is inexorably brought to nothingness, it is then that with certain persons the interior being rebels and rises up into an attitude of desperate resistance. "There *must* be something more"—cries the "obtuse consciousness of the ignorant" before the corpse of a beloved being; and an analogous sentiment to that inspires the thinker to accept certain generalizations of positive science.

You know, for example, that for the thermodynamic theory the universe in its totality is but a vast machine, of which all the changes are due to the differences of temperature existing between its extreme limits—namely, the incandescent nebulæ on the one

hand, and, on the other, the absolute zero of interstellar space (273° C.). It is in the course of this cooling (the degradation of energy) from one of these limits to the other that the chemical combinations are formed—so unstable—which constitute our living being. But this condition, favorable to the unfolding of life, would only have appeared very late,[1] and then only to last a short time, since a further fall of some dozen degrees would suffice to congeal forever this protoplasm. So that one might conclude with M. Henry Poincaré that life is but a short episode between two eternities of death, and that, in this episode even, conscious thought has lasted and will last but a moment. Thought is only a flash in the middle of a long night. Yet it is this flash which is everything![2]

The spiritualist cannot believe that this flash in the pan is everything. For him life is of more value; it has more definite purpose. . . . For the spiritualist it does not matter whether spiritism be true or false; if false, that proves nothing against the moral significance of the universe and the reality of another life; if true, so much the better—though materialism might interpret the facts as demonstrating a mere prolongation (purely temporary) of consciousness due to the

[1] Toward 40° C.; *i. e.*, quite near the final term of this gigantic fall of temperature, when one thinks of the millions and millions of degrees from its point of departure.

[2] There are many other proofs of spiritualism—these being the revelations of the interior life; but at present I am content to lay these to one side, and consider the questions purely from the more objective point of view.

persistence for some time after death of certain combinations of organic forces or forms of energy, more slow to decompose than the denser anatomical structures which we perceive with our senses. (Was this not the idea of Lombroso, whom certain observations had convinced of this temporary survival, without modifying, so far as I know, his philosophical tendencies, and who became a spiritist without becoming a spiritualist?)[1] In other words, spiritism is neither *necessary* nor *sufficient* for spiritualism; and while the first, by its claims to experimental demonstration, is in constant struggle with positive science and its methods of reasoning, the second by its agnostic character finds itself sheltered from conflicts of this kind. . . .

Such, sir, are the principal characteristic features which strike me in spiritualism as compared with spiritism. . . . But I foresee your reply to all that I have said: "But to make spiritualism depend upon the mind and will is to confess that its truth is not *demonstrated*." No, sir, it is not demonstrated. But cite me a philosophy which is! It is certainly not monism—however much its votaries contend that it is; and neither is spiritism, of which the proofs are not yet sufficiently strong to convince all those who witness or hear about them. In no metaphysical doctrine are there proofs of this kind; the individual must always remain the sole judge. There are not even

[1] "The conclusions of spiritism are far from contradicting those of monism, for the soul, in returning through a fluidic form of matter, continues to belong to the world of matter."—Lombroso, *Hypnotisme et Spiritisme*, p. 6.

probabilities, in the scientific sense of the word. We choose always that which appeals to us as true. . . . Let us recognize, then, that when we consider the riddle of the universe, all hypotheses are logically equivalent, equally irrefutable and undemonstrable. There is nothing absurd — *i. e.*, contradictory — in supposing that this world is absurd, that is to say, denuded of all reasonable sense—the product of pure chance, in which the "bad genius" of Descartes tries to deceive us; or that it is the work of an imbecile or a fool. But there is also nothing absurd in supposing that it has sense, and a sense which tends toward a life of truth and justice, of beauty and of goodness, of saintliness and love—since these aspirations are part of ourselves and we make part of the universe; and we cannot comprehend very well how Substance or the Absolute could create conscious personalities having these desires and fancies!

Confess, then, that it is not less absurd to believe in the survival of individual beings than in their annihilation—even should one not believe in the return of the discarnate through a medium—so that the position of the spiritualists who are not spiritists is far from being as untenable as you imagine.

CONCLUSION

It is time to terminate this epistle, already too long. Permit me to sum up and conclude briefly.

Under the apparent unity of its vocabulary contemporaneous spiritism is a combination of two very

different things: First, a spiritualistic philosophy, essentially moral and religious, of the universe and of life; and secondly, the ancient animistic belief in the intervention of spirits of the dead in our world. . . .

This belief in spirits, which its adherents claim today to have proved scientifically, is the relic of a universal belief which dates from the infancy of humanity, because it explains certain remarkable phenomena (somnambulism, pathological dissociations, multiple personality, etc.) which seem at first sight capable of explanation only by supposing that spirits are present, different from that of the patient. This interpretation, and especially the practices which it suggests, increase the deplorable consequences to the mental and physical health. The Hebrew legislators and prophets, with their wonderful intuition as to the necessity of social hygiene and the conditions of true spirituality, attempted, without complete success, to eliminate these harmful customs in denouncing them as a religious abomination. The modern savants ought to continue this work of cleansing and purification from another point of view—by means of the newly discovered tools of experimental science. Unfortunately, infatuated by their own materialistic conceptions and prejudiced against spiritism by reason of its musty odor of superstition, they believed for long that it would suffice to oppose it by silence and scorn, without deigning to examine the very real phenomena with which it was fed. They did not see that for savants the display of this obstinate ignorance, this negation of

popular beliefs, is an idiotic policy which ultimately brings about its own undoing. . . .

The doctrine of spiritism, free as it is from complicated "theories of knowledge" and higher metaphysical speculations, is fitted for the masses, and, as many have doubtless found consolation in this belief, one should not make fun of it. . . . Further, since it opens the doors of conviction to the reality of a world beyond our senses, it serves its place and leads to further convictions. . . . There are spiritists, too, who have never attended a séance or seen a single manifestation, and who state that they hold to their belief simply because of the simplicity, the beauty, the moral and religious evidence of the spiritistic teachings (the indefinite progress of the soul as the result of individual effort, etc.).

It is not to be denied, then, that spiritism as a whole —phenomena and doctrine, the one carrying the other—has done a certain amount of good. Many savants have been conquered by the power of the facts of which they have been witnesses.[1] These are the glorious trophies of spiritism; and in more modest

[1] To quote only one example: "I was," said A. R. Wallace, "a materialist so complete and so convinced that there was no place in my mind for any spiritual existence, or for any other agents in the universe than matter and force. Facts, however, are stubborn things. . . . These facts convinced me. They forced me to accept them *as facts* long before I could accept the spiritistic explanation. There was not at that time in the fabric of my thoughts place for this conception. Little by little a place was made. It was made, not by preconceived opinions, but by a continuous accumulation of fact upon fact, which could not be explained in any other way."

spheres its victories are so numerous that it has become a factor in social and religious evolution of considerable importance. . . . At the same time, I believe that spiritism is in many ways decidedly detrimental to the moral health of the community. Many become disillusioned, it is true, and return either to their former complete incredulity, or, if faith remains to them, they again join the Church. Leaders of spiritism endeavor to retain these skeptics by bringing forward newer scientific truths—of which they themselves are not sure and which constantly run the risk of being disproved by later discoveries or by different interpretations better founded.

Without doubt there are always some superior natures for whom moral reasons would have more effect than sensible phenomena, and who in spite of their disillusioning would remain faithful to spiritualism, even though they had failed to believe in spiritism. But they are the exceptions. It is in the hope of increasing their numbers that I write you this letter, in an endeavor to convert you to *spiritualism*, which relates to the intimate consciousness of all, and has nothing to expect from the doubtful facts of *spiritism*, which we may safely leave to future investigations in metapsychics.

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